Critique of Practical Reason

IMMANUEL KANT

1724–1804

Critique of Practical Reason

Kritik der praktischen Vernunft

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

The *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant's second critique, asks how pure reason can by itself determine what we do. Its answer is the moral law, which we know directly, as a "fact of reason," and which in turn proves that we are free.

From there Kant builds his account of respect for the moral law as the only truly moral motive, and of the highest good: virtue joined with the happiness it deserves. Since we cannot achieve that in this life alone, he argues, practical reason entitles us to postulate freedom, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God.

It ends with one of the most famous passages in philosophy: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

Preface

Kant explains why there is a critique of practical reason and how freedom holds the system together.

[3] Why this critique is entitled simply a Critique of Practical Reason in general, and not a Critique of *Pure* Practical Reason—even though the parallel with the critique of speculative reason seems to demand the latter—is sufficiently explained in the treatise itself. Its only aim is to show *that there is pure practical reason*, and with this aim it critiques reason's entire *practical faculty*. If it succeeds in this, it has no need to critique the *pure faculty itself* in order to see whether reason, in claiming such a faculty, is not *overstepping* itself through a mere presumption (as does indeed happen with speculative reason). For if, as pure reason, it is really practical, then it proves its own reality and the reality of its concepts by the deed, and all sophistry against the possibility of its being so is futile.

With this faculty, transcendental *freedom* is now also established—taken, moreover, in that absolute sense in which speculative reason needed it, in its use of the concept of causality, in order to rescue itself from the antinomy into which it inevitably falls when it tries to think the *unconditioned* in the series of causal connection. Speculative reason, however, could put forward this concept only problematically, as not impossible to think, without securing its objective reality. It did so solely so as not to have its very essence challenged, and be plunged into an abyss of skepticism, by the alleged impossibility of something that it must at least allow to count as thinkable.

The concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, now forms the *keystone* of the whole edifice of a system of pure reason, even of speculative [4] reason. All the other concepts (those of God and immortality), which as mere ideas remain without support in speculative reason, now attach themselves to it, and with it and through it gain stability and objective reality. That is, their *possibility* is *proved* by the fact that freedom is real; for this idea reveals itself through the moral law.

Freedom, however, is also the only one of all the ideas of speculative reason whose possibility we *know a priori*, though without having insight into it, because it is the condition[1] of the moral law, which we do know. The ideas of *God* and *immortality*, on the other hand, are not conditions of the moral law, but only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law—that is, of the merely practical use of our pure reason. So with regard to those ideas we cannot claim to *cognize* and *have insight into*—I will not merely say their reality—but not even their possibility. Nevertheless they are the conditions of applying the morally determined will to its object, which is given to it *a priori* (the highest good).[2] Consequently their possibility can and must be *assumed* in this practical relation, without our cognizing it theoretically or having insight into it. For this assumption it is enough, for a practical purpose, that they contain no inner impossibility (contradiction). Here, then, is a ground of assent that is merely *subjective* in comparison with speculative reason, yet is *objectively* valid for a reason just as pure, but prac-

1 KANT'S NOTE. Lest anyone imagine finding *inconsistencies* here, when I now call freedom the condition of the moral law and later, in the treatise, maintain that the moral law is the condition under which we can first *become conscious* of freedom, I will simply remind the reader that freedom is indeed the *ratio essendi* [ground of being] of the moral law, whereas the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* [ground of knowing] of freedom. For had the moral law not already been distinctly thought in our reason, we would never consider ourselves justified in *assuming* such a thing as freedom (even though it does not contradict itself). But were there no freedom, the moral law would *not be found* in us at all.

2 *A priori* (Latin, "from what comes before"): known independently of experience; *a posteriori*, known through experience.

tical. Through it, by means of the concept of freedom, the ideas of God and immortality are given objective reality and a warrant —indeed, a subjective necessity (a need of pure reason)—to assume them. Yet reason is not thereby [5] extended in theoretical cognition. All that is given is this: the possibility, which before was only a *problem*, here becomes an *assertion*; and so the practical use of reason is connected with the elements of its theoretical use. And this need is not a hypothetical one, arising from some *arbitrary* purpose of speculation—that one must assume something if one *wants* to ascend to the completion of reason's use in speculation. It is a *lawful* need: to assume something without which there cannot come about what one ought, unremittingly, to set as the aim of all one's doing and refraining.

It would certainly be more satisfying for our speculative reason to solve those problems on its own, without this detour, and to keep the solutions as insight for practical use; but our faculty of speculation is simply not that well off. Those who boast of such lofty cognitions should not hold them back but present them publicly to be examined and admired. They want to *prove*: very well, then let them prove, and the critique will lay all its armor at their feet as victors. *Quid statis? Nolint. Atqui licet esse beatis.* [Why do you stand there? They refuse. And yet they could be happy.][3] — Since, then, they in fact do not want to, presumably because they cannot, we must after all take up that armor again, in order to seek the concepts of *God*, *freedom* and *immortality*—for whose *possibility* speculation finds no sufficient guarantee—in the moral use of reason, and to ground them on that use.

Here too, for the first time, the riddle of the critique is explained: how one can *deny* objective *reality* to the supersensible *use of the categories* in speculation and yet *grant* them this *reality* with respect to the objects of pure practical reason. Before this, it must necessarily look *inconsistent*, so long as one knows such a practical use only by name. But suppose one now

3 Horace, *Satires* 1.1.19: a god offers discontented people the lives they envy, and they decline.

becomes aware, through a complete analysis of this practical use, that the reality in question does not amount here to any theoretical *determination of the categories*, or to any extension of cognition to the supersensible, but means only that in this relation *an object* belongs to them in every case—because they are either contained in the necessary *a priori* determination of the will or inseparably bound up with its object. Then that inconsistency vanishes, because one is making a different use of those concepts from the one speculative reason [6] needs. On the other hand, there now opens up a scarcely expected and very satisfying confirmation of the *consistent way of thinking* of the speculative critique. That critique insisted that the objects of experience as such, including even our own subject, be taken only as *appearances*, but that things in themselves nonetheless be placed at their basis—and so that not everything supersensible be held a fiction, nor its concept empty of content. And now practical reason, on its own and without having made any arrangement with speculative reason, provides reality to a supersensible object of the category of causality, namely *freedom* (although, as a practical concept, only for practical use), and so confirms by a fact what could there only be *thought*. Here at the same time the strange, though incontestable, claim of the speculative critique —that *even the thinking subject is, in inner intuition, a mere appearance to itself*—also receives its full confirmation in the critique of practical reason; so fully, in fact, that one would have to arrive at it even if the first critique had not proved this proposition at all[4].

This also lets me understand why the weightiest objections to the critique that I have so far met with turn on precisely these two hinges. *On the one hand*, there is the objective reality of the

4 KANT'S NOTE. Causality as freedom and causality as the mechanism of nature are both established—the first through the moral law, the second through the law of nature—and in one and the same subject, the human being. To unite them is impossible unless we represent this subject, in relation to the first, as a being in itself, but in relation to the second as appearance: the former in *pure* consciousness, the latter in *empirical* consciousness. Without this, reason's contradiction with itself is unavoidable.

categories as applied to noumena, denied in theoretical cognition and affirmed in practical. *On the other*, there is the paradoxical demand that one make oneself, as subject of freedom, a noumenon, but at the same time, with regard to nature, a phenomenon in one's own empirical consciousness.[5] For so long as one had formed no determinate concepts of morality and freedom, one could not guess, on the one hand, what one meant to place as noumenon at the basis of the supposed appearance, nor, on the other, whether it was even possible to form any concept of it at all, if one had already devoted all the concepts of the pure understanding, in their theoretical use, exclusively to mere appearances. Only a detailed critique of practical [7] reason can remove all this misinterpretation and set in a clear light the consistent way of thinking that constitutes its greatest merit.

So much by way of justifying why, in this work, the concepts and principles of pure speculative reason, which have already undergone their own special critique, are here and there subjected to examination once again. This would not otherwise befit the systematic course of a science still to be built (since matters already adjudicated should properly just be cited, not reopened). Yet *here* it was permitted, indeed necessary, because reason is being considered with those concepts as it passes over to a use wholly different from the one it made of them *there*. Such a transition, however, makes it necessary to compare the older use with the newer, in order to distinguish the new track clearly from the previous one while also bringing out their connection. Considerations of this kind—among others, those directed once again at the concept of freedom, but now in the practical use of pure reason—should therefore not be regarded as insertions meant only to fill gaps in the critical system of speculative reason (for that system is complete for its purpose), or to add props and buttresses after the fact, as tends to happen with a hastily erected building. They should be regarded as true members, which make the coherence of the system visible, so

5 Noumenon (from Greek, "what is thought"): a thing as it is in itself, beyond any possible experience; a phenomenon is a thing as it appears to us.

that concepts which could there be presented only problematically can now be understood in their real presentation. This reminder concerns chiefly the concept of freedom. One cannot help noticing with surprise that so many still boast of understanding it perfectly well and of being able to explain its possibility, while considering it merely in a psychological respect. Had they first weighed it carefully in its transcendental respect, they would have recognized both its *indispensability*, as a problematic concept, in the complete use of speculative reason, and its utter *incomprehensibility*. And had they then gone on with it to practical use, they would have had to arrive of their own accord at precisely the same determination of that use, with regard to its principles, that they are otherwise so reluctant to accept. The concept of freedom is the stumbling block for all *empiricists*, but it is also the key to the most sublime practical principles for *critical* moralists, who [8] see through it that they must necessarily proceed *rationally*. For this reason I ask the reader not to pass over with a cursory glance what is said about this concept at the end of the Analytic.

RELATION TO THE GROUNDWORK

Kant says this work presupposes the Groundwork only for its formula of duty, and answers a reviewer.

Whether a system such as the one developed here—a system of pure practical reason drawn from the critique of that reason—has cost much effort or little, above all so as not to miss the right standpoint from which the whole of it can be correctly sketched, I must leave to those who know work of this kind to judge. It does presuppose the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, but only insofar as that work makes a preliminary acquaintance with the principle of duty and states and justifies a determinate

formula of it[6]; otherwise the present work stands on its own. That a *division* of all the practical sciences has not been added for the sake of *completeness*, as the critique of speculative reason supplied one, also has a valid reason, which lies in the nature of this practical faculty of reason.[7] For the particular determination of duties as human duties, in order to divide them, is possible only if the subject of this determination (the human being) has first been cognized as he is actually constituted—though only so far as is necessary in relation to duty in general. But this does not belong in a critique of practical reason in general, which is only to state completely the principles of its possibility, its scope and its limits, without particular reference to human nature. The division therefore belongs here to the system of science, not to the system of critique.

To a certain truth-loving and sharp-witted—and therefore always respectable—reviewer of that *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, I have, I hope, given satisfaction in the second chapter of the Analytic regarding his objection *that the concept of the* [9] *good was not established there* (as in his opinion it should

6 KANT'S NOTE. A reviewer who wanted to say something in criticism of that work hit the mark better than he himself probably intended when he said that it sets up no new principle of morality but only a *new formula*. But who would want to introduce a new principle of all morality and, as it were, invent morality for the first time? As if, before him, the world had been ignorant of what duty is, or thoroughly in error about it. Yet anyone who knows what a *formula* means to a mathematician—one that determines quite precisely what is to be done to solve a problem, and does not let one go astray—will not regard a formula that does this with respect to all duty in general as something insignificant and dispensable.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Usually identified as Gottlob August Tittel, who published a critique of Kant's moral theory in 1786.

7 Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), his first major work in moral philosophy.

have been) *before the moral principle*[8]. I have likewise taken into account many other objections that have reached me from men who show that they have at heart the will to find out the truth (for those who have only their old system in view, and who have already decided in advance what is to be approved or disapproved, want no discussion that might stand in the way of their [10] private purpose). And I shall go on doing the same.[9]

When the task is to determine a particular faculty of the human soul according to its sources, contents and limits, then, given the nature of human cognition, one can begin only with its *parts*, with an exact and complete presentation of them (complete so far as is possible in the present state of the elements of

8 KANT'S NOTE. One could further object that I have not first explained the concept of the *faculty of desire* or of the *feeling of pleasure*. This reproach would be unfair, however, since one should reasonably be able to presuppose this explanation as given in psychology. Admittedly, the definition there might be so framed that the feeling of pleasure is placed at the basis of the determination of the faculty of desire (as in fact commonly happens). But then the supreme principle of practical philosophy would necessarily turn out to be *empirical*—which is precisely what has first to be settled, and which this critique refutes completely. So I will give the explanation here as it must be given in order, as is only fair, to leave this disputed point undecided at the start. — *Life* is a being's faculty of acting according to laws of the faculty of desire. The *faculty of desire* is a being's *faculty of being, through its representations, the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations. Pleasure is the representation of the agreement of an object or an action with the subjective conditions of life*, that is, with the faculty of the *causality of a representation with respect to the reality of its object* (or of the determination of the subject's powers to the action of producing it). I need no more than this for the purposes of the critique of concepts borrowed from psychology; the critique itself does the rest. It is easy to see that this explanation leaves undecided the question whether pleasure must always be placed at the basis of the faculty of desire, or whether under certain conditions it only follows upon the determination of that faculty. For the explanation is composed entirely of marks belonging to the pure understanding, that is, of categories, which contain nothing empirical. Such caution is highly advisable throughout philosophy, and yet it is often neglected: not to anticipate one's judgments by a rash definition before the concept has been completely analyzed—which is often achieved only very late. Throughout the whole course of the critique (of theoretical as well as practical reason), one will also notice many occasions for making up deficiencies in the old dogmatic procedure of philosophy and for correcting errors that go unnoticed until one makes a use of reason with concepts *that bears on the whole of reason*.

9 Hermann Andreas Pistorius, who reviewed the *Groundwork* in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*.

it we have already acquired). But there is a second, more philosophical and *architectonic* concern: namely, to grasp the *idea of the whole* correctly and, starting from that idea, to keep in view all those parts in their reciprocal relation to one another, by deriving them from the concept of that whole in a pure faculty of reason. This examination and guarantee is possible only through the most intimate acquaintance with the system. Those who found the first inquiry tiresome, and so did not think it worth the trouble to acquire this acquaintance, do not reach the second stage, namely the overview, which is a synthetic return to what was previously given analytically. And it is no wonder that they find inconsistencies everywhere, although the gaps these lead them to suspect are to be found not in the system itself but only in their own incoherent train of thought.

With regard to this treatise, I have no fear of the reproach that I want to introduce a *new language*, since the kind of cognition here comes of itself close to popularity. Nor could this reproach have occurred, with regard to the first critique, to anyone who had not merely leafed through it but thought it through. To contrive new words where the language already has no lack of expressions for given concepts is a childish effort to stand out from the crowd—if not by new and true thoughts, then by a new patch on an old garment. So if readers of that work know more popular expressions that are nonetheless just as adequate to the thought as mine seem to me to be, or if they venture to show that these thoughts themselves are null—and with them every expression that designates them—then by the first they would greatly oblige me, for I only want to be understood; and by the second they would earn the gratitude of philosophy. But so long as those thoughts still stand, [11] I very much doubt that expres-

sions adequate to them and yet more current are likely to be found.[10]

AGAINST UNIVERSAL EMPIRICISM

Kant argues that denying all a priori cognition would end in a skepticism worse than Hume's.

[12] In this way the *a priori* principles of two faculties of the mind—the faculty of cognition and the faculty of desire—would now be

10 KANT'S NOTE. More than such unintelligibility, what I fear here is the occasional misinterpretation of certain expressions that I chose with the greatest care, so that the concept they point to would not be missed. Thus, in the table of categories of *practical* reason, under the heading of modality, the *permitted* and the *forbidden* (the practically-objectively possible and impossible) have almost the same meaning in ordinary usage as the next category, *duty* and *what is contrary to duty*. Here, however, the *former* is to mean what agrees or conflicts with a merely *possible* practical precept (as, say, in the solution of all problems of geometry and mechanics); the *latter*, what stands in such a relation to a law *actually* lying in reason as such. And this difference of meaning is not wholly foreign to ordinary usage either, even if it is somewhat unusual. For example, it is *forbidden* to an orator, as such, to forge new words or constructions; to a poet it is to some extent *permitted*; in neither case is any thought given to duty. For if someone wants to forfeit his reputation as an orator, no one can stop him. The point here is only the distinction between *imperatives* with *problematic*, *assertoric* and *apodictic* determining grounds. Likewise, in the note where I set side by side the moral ideas of practical perfection held by different philosophical schools, I distinguished the idea of *wisdom* from that of *holiness*, although I myself declared them to be at bottom and objectively the same. But in that place I understand by wisdom only the wisdom that the human being (the Stoic) arrogates to himself—wisdom, that is, *subjectively* and fancifully ascribed to the human being as a property. (Perhaps the expression *virtue*, which the Stoic also made a great show of, would better designate what is characteristic of his school.) But the expression *postulate* of pure practical reason could most readily give rise to misinterpretation, if one confused it with the meaning of the postulates of pure mathematics, which carry apodictic certainty with them. These, however, postulate the *possibility of an action* whose object has already been cognized, theoretically and *a priori*, with complete certainty, as *possible*. The former, by contrast, postulates the possibility of an *object* itself (God and the immortality of the soul) on the basis of apodictic *practical* laws, and so only on behalf of a practical reason. The certainty of this postulated possibility is thus not theoretical at all, and hence not apodictic either—not a necessity cognized with respect to the object—but an assumption necessary with respect to the subject for obeying reason's objective but practical laws; hence merely a necessary hypothesis. I could find no better expression for this subjective, yet true and unconditional, necessity of reason.

ascertained and determined as to the conditions, scope and limits of their use; and a secure foundation would thereby be laid for a systematic philosophy, theoretical as well as practical, as a science.

Nothing worse could befall these efforts than if someone made the unexpected discovery that there is no *a priori* cognition at all, and can be none. But there is no danger of that. It would be as if someone wanted to prove by reason that there is no reason. For we say that we cognize something through reason only when we are conscious that we could have known it even if it had not come before us in experience in that way; hence rational cognition and *a priori* cognition are one and the same. To try to squeeze necessity out of a proposition of experience (*ex pumice aquam* [water from a pumice stone]), and with it to procure true universality for a judgment (without which there is no inference of reason—and so not even inference by analogy, which is an at least presumed universality and objective necessity, and thus always presupposes it)—this is a flat contradiction. To substitute subjective necessity, that is, habit, for objective necessity, which is found only in *a priori* judgments, is to deny reason the faculty of judging about the object—that is, of cognizing it and what belongs to it—and, for example,[11] not to say, of what has often and always followed upon a certain preceding state, that one can *infer* the one from the other (for that would mean objective necessity and the concept of an *a priori* connection), but only that one may expect similar cases (much as animals do)—that is, at bottom to reject the concept of cause as false and a mere illusion of thought. Suppose one tried to remedy this lack of objective validity, and of the universal validity that follows from it, by saying that we see no reason to ascribe a different way of representing to other rational beings. If that yielded a valid inference, then our ignorance would do more to extend our cognition than all our reflection. For merely because we know no rational beings other than humans, we would have a right to assume that they are constituted as we cognize

11 A proverb for the impossible, found in Plautus's comedy *Persa*.

ourselves to be—that is, we would really know them. I do not even mention here that it is not the universality of assent that proves the objective [13] validity of a judgment (that is, its validity as cognition). Even if that universality happened by chance to obtain, it could still not furnish a proof of agreement with the object; on the contrary, objective validity alone constitutes the ground of a necessary universal agreement.

Hume would be quite content with this system of *universal empiricism* in principles. For, as is well known, he asked for nothing more than that, in place of any objective meaning of necessity in the concept of cause, a merely subjective one—namely habit—be assumed, so as to deny reason all judgment about God, freedom and immortality; and he certainly knew very well how, once his principles were granted, to draw conclusions from them with complete logical rigor. But not even *Hume* made empiricism so universal as to include mathematics as well.[12] He held the propositions of mathematics to be analytic. If that were correct, they would indeed be apodictic as well; yet nothing could be inferred from this about a faculty of reason for making apodictic judgments in philosophy too—that is, judgments that would be synthetic (like the principle of causality). But if one adopted empiricism of principles *universally*, then mathematics too would be caught up in it.

Now mathematics comes into conflict with a reason that admits only empirical principles—as is unavoidable in the antinomy, since mathematics proves irrefutably the infinite divisibility of space, which empiricism cannot allow. Then the greatest possible evidence of demonstration stands in open contradiction with the alleged inferences from principles of experience, and one must ask, like *Cheselden*'s blind man: "What deceives me, sight or touch?" (For empiricism is based on a necessity that

12 David Hume (1711–1776), Scottish philosopher, who argued that the necessity we attribute to causes is only a habit of expectation formed by repeated experience.

is *felt*, rationalism on one that is *understood*.)[13] And so universal empiricism reveals itself as genuine *skepticism*—which was wrongly ascribed to *Hume* in so unlimited a sense[14], since he at least left a sure touchstone of experience [14] in mathematics. Universal empiricism, by contrast, permits absolutely no touchstone of experience (such a touchstone can only ever be found in *a priori* principles), even though experience consists not merely of feelings but also of judgments.

However, since in this philosophical and critical age that empiricism can hardly be meant seriously, and is presumably put forward only as an exercise for the power of judgment and to set the necessity of rational *a priori* principles in a clearer light by contrast, we may still be grateful to those who are willing to take the trouble over this otherwise not very instructive work.

13 William Cheselden (1688–1752), English surgeon, who in 1728 reported on a boy blind from birth who gained his sight after a cataract operation and at first could not match what he saw to what he touched.

14 KANT'S NOTE. Names that designate a sectarian following have always brought much unfair distortion with them—roughly as if someone were to say: "*N. is an idealist*." For although he not only fully concedes but insists that real external objects correspond to our representations of external things, he nevertheless holds that the form of their intuition belongs not to them but only to the human mind.

Introduction

The idea of a critique of practical reason.

[15] The theoretical use of reason was concerned with objects of the mere faculty of cognition. A critique of reason with regard to this use really concerned only the *pure* faculty of cognition, because this faculty aroused the suspicion—afterward confirmed—that it easily strays beyond its limits and loses itself among unattainable objects, or even among concepts that contradict one another. With the practical use of reason it is quite otherwise. In this use, reason is concerned with determining grounds of the will, which is a faculty either of producing objects corresponding to representations, or at least of determining itself to bring such objects about (whether or not its physical capacity is sufficient)—that is, of determining its causality. For here reason can at least achieve a determination of the will, and so far as it is merely a matter of willing, it always has objective reality. Here, then, the first question is whether pure reason by itself alone is sufficient to determine the will, or whether it can be a determining ground of the will only as empirically conditioned. Now at this point a concept of causality enters that is justified by the Critique of Pure Reason, though it admits of no empirical presentation: namely, that of *freedom*. And if we can now find grounds to prove that this property does in fact belong to the human will (and so also to the will of all rational beings), then it will be shown not only that pure reason can be practical, but that it alone, and not empirically limited reason, is unconditionally practical. Consequently we shall have to work out a critique not of *pure practical* reason but only of *practical* reason in

general. [16] For pure reason, once it has been shown that there is such a thing, needs no critique. It is pure reason itself that contains the standard for the critique of all its use. The critique of practical reason in general thus has the task of preventing empirically conditioned reason from presuming that it alone, to the exclusion of all else, supplies the determining ground of the will. The use of pure reason, once it is settled that there is such a reason, is alone immanent. The empirically conditioned use, which lays claim to sole dominion, is by contrast transcendent, and expresses itself in demands and commands that go far beyond its domain—exactly the reverse of what could be said of pure reason in its speculative use.

Nevertheless, since it is still pure reason whose cognition here underlies the practical use, the division of a critique of practical reason must follow, in its general outline, that of the critique of speculative reason. We shall therefore need a *Doctrine of Elements* and a *Doctrine of Method*; and within the former, as the first part, an *Analytic* as the rule of truth, and a *Dialectic* as the exposition and resolution of illusion in the judgments of practical reason. But the order in the subdivision of the Analytic will in turn be the reverse of the order in the Critique of pure speculative reason. For in the present critique we shall begin with *principles* and proceed to *concepts*, and only from these, where possible, to the senses; whereas with speculative reason we had to begin with the senses and end with principles. The reason for this lies, once again, in the fact that we are now dealing with a will, and have to consider reason not in its relation to objects but in relation to this will and its causality. The principles of empirically unconditioned causality must therefore come first; only then can we attempt to establish our concepts of the determining ground of such a will, of their application to objects, and finally to the subject and its sensibility. The law of causality through freedom, that is, some pure practical principle, here unavoidably comes first and determines the objects to which alone it can be referred.

The principles of pure practical reason

The fundamental law of morality, the fact of reason, and freedom.

§ 1. ERKLÄRUNG.

[19] Practical *principles* are propositions that contain a general determination of the will, having several practical rules under it. They are subjective, or *maxims*, when the condition is regarded by the subject as valid only for his own will; but they are objective, or practical *laws*, when the condition is cognized as objective, that is, as valid for the will of every rational being.

MAXIMS AND LAWS

Subjective principles are maxims; only principles valid for every rational will are practical laws.

If one assumes that *pure* reason can contain within itself a ground that is practical—that is, sufficient to determine the will—then there are practical laws; but if not, all practical principles will be mere maxims. In the pathologically affected will of a rational being, a conflict can be found between its maxims and the practical laws it itself cognizes. For example, someone can make it his maxim to let no insult go unavenged, and yet at the same time see that this is no practical law but only his maxim—and that, taken as a rule for the will of every rational being, it could not agree with itself in one and the same maxim. In the cognition of nature, the principles of what happens (for

example,[1] the principle of the equality of action and reaction in the communication of motion) are at the same time laws of nature; for there the use [20] of reason is theoretical and determined by the constitution of the object. In practical cognition—that is, cognition that has to do only with determining grounds of the will—principles that one makes for oneself are not, just for that reason, laws to which one is unavoidably subject. For in practical matters reason has to do with the subject, namely with the faculty of desire, and the rule can vary in many ways according to the particular constitution of that faculty.—The practical rule is always a product of reason, because it prescribes action as a means to an effect, taken as a purpose. For a being in whom reason is not the sole determining ground of the will, however, this rule is an *imperative*: that is, a rule designated by an "ought," which expresses the objective necessitation of the action, and signifies that if reason determined the will completely, the action would inevitably take place according to this rule. Imperatives therefore hold objectively and are wholly distinct from maxims, which are subjective principles. Imperatives, however, either determine the conditions of the causality of the rational being as an efficient cause merely with respect to the effect and the means sufficient to it, or they determine only the will, whether or not it is sufficient for the effect. The former would be hypothetical imperatives and contain mere precepts of skill; the latter, by contrast, would be categorical and would alone be practical laws. Maxims, then, are indeed *principles*, but not *imperatives*. And imperatives themselves, when they are conditional—that is, when they determine the will not simply as will but only with respect to a desired effect, which is to say when they are hypothetical imperatives—are indeed practical *precepts*, but not *laws*. Laws must sufficiently determine the will as will even before I ask whether I have the capacity required for a desired effect, or what I must do to bring it about. They must therefore be categorical; otherwise they are not laws, because

1 "Pathological" in Kant means affected by sensibility—by feeling and inclination—not diseased.

they lack the necessity which, if it is to be practical, must be independent of pathological conditions—conditions, therefore, that attach to the will only contingently. Tell someone, for example, that he must work and save in his youth so as not to go in want in his old age: this is a correct and at the same time important practical precept of the will. But one easily sees that the will is here referred to something *else*, which it is presupposed to desire; and this desire must be left to the agent himself. Perhaps he foresees other resources besides the wealth he has acquired himself; or he does not expect to grow old at all; or he thinks that, should need arise, he will one day be able to make do with little. Reason, from which alone any rule that is to contain necessity can arise, does indeed put necessity into this precept of its own (for without that it would be no imperative); but this necessity is only subjectively conditioned, and one cannot presuppose it in the same degree in all subjects. For reason to give law, however, it is required that it need presuppose only *itself*, [21] because a rule is objectively and universally valid only when it holds without the contingent, subjective conditions that distinguish one rational being from another. Now tell someone that he should never make a lying promise: this is a rule that concerns only his will, whether or not the purposes a person may have can be achieved through it. The mere willing is what is to be determined completely *a priori* by that rule. Now if it turns out that this rule is practically correct, then it is a law, because it is a categorical imperative. Thus practical laws refer only to the will, without regard to what is accomplished by its causality; and one can abstract from that causality (as belonging to the world of sense) in order to have the laws in their purity.

THEOREM I: MATERIAL PRINCIPLES ARE EMPIRICAL

Any principle that makes a desired object the ground of the will is empirical and yields no law.

All practical principles that presuppose an *object* (matter) of the faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will are, without exception, empirical and can supply no practical laws.

By the matter of the faculty of desire I understand an object whose reality is desired. Now if the desire for this object precedes the practical rule and is the condition of making the rule one's principle, then I say (first): this principle is in that case always empirical. For the determining ground of choice is then the representation of an object, together with that relation of the representation to the subject by which the faculty of desire is determined to make the object real. Such a relation to the subject, however, is called *pleasure* in the reality of an object. So this pleasure would have to be presupposed as the condition of the possibility of the determination of choice. But of no representation of any object whatever can it be cognized *a priori* whether it will be connected with *pleasure* or *displeasure*, or will be *indifferent*. So in such a case the determining ground of choice must always be empirical, and so too must the material practical principle that presupposed it as a condition.

Now (*second*), a principle based only on the subjective condition of receptivity to a pleasure or displeasure (which can only ever be cognized empirically and cannot be valid in the same way for all rational beings) may well serve as a *maxim* for the subject who possesses this receptivity. But it cannot serve as a *law* even for that subject (because it lacks objective [22] necessity, which must be cognized *a priori*). Therefore such a principle can never supply a practical law.

THEOREM II: THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-LOVE

All material practical principles fall under self-love, the principle of one's own happiness.

All material practical principles are, as such, of one and the same kind, and belong under the general principle of self-love or one's own happiness.

Pleasure arising from the representation of a thing's existence, insofar as it is to be a determining ground of the desire for this thing, is based on the *receptivity* of the subject, because it *depends* on the existence of an object. It therefore belongs to sense (feeling), and not to the understanding, which expresses a relation of the representation to an *object* according to concepts, not to the subject according to feelings. It is thus practical only insofar as the sensation of agreeableness that the subject expects from the reality of the object determines the faculty of desire. Now a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life, uninterruptedly accompanying its whole existence, is *happiness*; and the principle of making happiness the supreme determining ground of choice is the principle of self-love. So all material principles, which place the determining ground of choice in the pleasure or displeasure to be felt from the reality of some object, are wholly of *one kind*, in that they all belong to the principle of self-love or one's own happiness.

LOWER AND HIGHER FACULTIES OF DESIRE

Only merely formal laws of the will could establish a higher faculty of desire.

All *material* practical rules place the determining ground of the will in the *lower faculty of desire*; and if there were no *merely formal* laws of the will that sufficiently determined it, then no *higher faculty of desire* could be admitted either.

PLEASURE DIFFERS ONLY IN DEGREE

Whether a pleasing representation comes from sense or understanding, pleasure determines the will the same way.

One can only wonder how men who are otherwise acute can believe they find the difference between the *lower* and the *higher faculty of desire* [23] in whether the *representations* connected with the feeling of pleasure have their origin in the *senses* or in the *understanding*. For when one asks about the determining grounds of desire and places them in an agreeableness expected from something, it does not matter at all where the *representation* of this pleasing object comes from, but only how much it *pleases*. If a representation—even one that has its seat and origin in the understanding—can determine choice only by presupposing a feeling of pleasure in the subject, then whether it is a determining ground of choice depends wholly on the constitution of inner sense: namely, on whether inner sense can be agreeably affected by it. The representations of objects may be as dissimilar as you like; they may be representations of the understanding, even of reason, as opposed to representations of the senses. Yet the feeling of pleasure through which alone they actually constitute the determining ground of the will (the agreeableness, the gratification one expects from them, which spurs the activity of producing the object) is of one and the same kind. It is so not only insofar as it can only ever be cognized empirically, but also insofar as it affects one and the same life force, which expresses itself in the faculty of desire; and in this respect it can differ from any other determining ground in nothing but degree. Otherwise, how could one compare in *magnitude* two determining grounds wholly different in their kind of representation, so as to prefer the one that most affects the faculty of desire? One and the same person can return unread an instructive book that has come into his hands only this once, so as not to miss the hunt; leave in the middle of a fine speech, so as not to be late for a meal; abandon an entertainment of intelli-

gent conversation, which he otherwise greatly values, to sit down at the gaming table; even turn away a poor man whom it is otherwise a joy for him to help, because he now has no more money in his pocket than he needs to pay for his seat at the theater. If the determination of the will rests on the feeling of agreeableness or disagreeableness that he expects from some cause, then it is all the same to him through what kind of representation he is affected. All that matters to him in deciding on his choice is how intense, how long-lasting, how easily acquired and how often repeated this agreeableness is. Someone who needs gold to spend does not care in the least whether its matter, the gold, was dug out of the mountains or washed out of the sand, provided it is accepted everywhere at the same value. In just the same way, no one who cares only about the agreeableness of life asks whether the representations are of the understanding or of the senses, but only *how much and how great a gratification* they will provide him for the longest time. Only those who would like to deny pure reason the faculty of determining the will without presupposing any feeling can stray [24] so far from their own explanation as to declare afterward to be wholly heterogeneous what they themselves had previously brought under one and the same principle. Thus we find, for example, that one can take gratification even in the mere *exercise of one's powers*, in the consciousness of one's strength of soul in overcoming obstacles that oppose our purposes, in the cultivation of the talents of the mind, and so on. And we rightly call these *finer* joys and delights, because they are more in our power than others, do not wear out, but rather strengthen our capacity to feel still more enjoyment of them, and, while they delight us, at the same time cultivate us. But to pass them off on that account as a way of determining the will different from determination merely through sense is a mistake: for these pleasures even to be possible, they presuppose, as the first condition of this satisfaction, a feeling in us that is attuned to them. It is just as if ignorant people who would like to dabble in metaphysics were to think of matter as so fine, so superfine, that they

themselves grow dizzy over it, and then believe that in this way they have devised a being that is *spiritual* and yet extended. If, with *Epicurus*, we make virtue's power to determine the will rest merely on the pleasure it promises, we cannot afterward reproach him for holding this pleasure to be entirely of the same kind as those of the coarsest senses. For there is no reason at all to charge him with having attributed the representations by which this feeling is aroused in us merely to the bodily senses. As far as one can guess, he looked for the source of many of them just as much in the use of the higher cognitive faculty. But that did not prevent him—and could not prevent him—from holding, in accordance with the principle just named, that the pleasure itself which those perhaps intellectual representations afford us, and through which alone they can be determining grounds of the will, is entirely of the same kind.[2] To be *consistent* is the greatest responsibility of a philosopher, and yet the one most rarely met with. The ancient Greek schools give us more examples of it than we find in our *syncretistic* age, in which a certain *coalition system* of contradictory principles, full of dishonesty and shallowness, is artfully contrived, because it goes down better with a public that is content to know something of everything and nothing as a whole, and so to be at home in every saddle. The principle of one's own happiness, however much understanding and reason may be used in it, would still contain no determining grounds for the will other than those suited to the *lower* faculty of desire. So either there is no higher faculty of desire at all, or *pure reason* must be practical by itself alone, that is, it must be able to determine the will through the mere form of the practical rule, without presupposing any feeling, and hence without representations of the agreeable or disagreeable as the matter of the faculty of desire, which is always an empirical condition of principles. Only then, and only insofar as it determines the will [25] by itself (and is not in the service of the inclinations), is reason a true *higher* faculty of desire, to

2 Epicurus (341–270 BC), Greek philosopher who held pleasure, understood as freedom from pain and disturbance, to be the highest good.

which the pathologically determinable one is subordinate. It is really, indeed *specifically*, distinct from the latter, so that even the slightest admixture of the latter's impulses impairs its strength and superiority—just as the slightest empirical element, as a condition in a mathematical demonstration, lowers and destroys its dignity and force. In a practical law reason determines the will immediately, not by means of an intervening feeling of pleasure and displeasure, not even pleasure in this law itself; and only the fact that it can be practical as pure reason makes it possible for it to be *lawgiving*.

HAPPINESS CANNOT BE A LAW

Every finite being wants happiness, but what happiness consists in differs by person and yields no law.

To be happy is necessarily the longing of every rational but finite being, and therefore an unavoidable determining ground of its faculty of desire. For contentment with one's whole existence is not, say, an original possession and a blessedness that would presuppose a consciousness of one's independent self-sufficiency. It is a problem forced upon such a being by its finite nature itself, because it is needy. And this need concerns the matter of its faculty of desire, that is, something that relates to a feeling of pleasure or displeasure underlying it subjectively, by which is determined what the being needs in order to be content with its condition. But precisely because this material determining ground can be cognized by the subject only empirically, it is impossible to regard this task as a law. For a law, being objective, would have to contain *the very same determining ground* of the will in all cases and for all rational beings. Although the concept of happiness *everywhere* underlies the practical relation of *objects* to the faculty of desire, it is still only the general heading for subjective determining grounds and determines nothing specifically. Yet this specific determination is the only thing that matters in this practical task, and without it the task cannot be solved at all. In what each person is to place his happiness

depends on his own particular feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and even, within one and the same subject, on the differences of need as this feeling changes. A *subjectively necessary* law (as a law of nature) is therefore *objectively* a very *contingent* practical principle, which can and must be very different in different subjects, and so can never yield a law. For in the desire for happiness what matters is not the form of lawfulness but solely the matter—namely, whether and how much pleasure I have to expect from following the law. Principles of self-love can indeed contain universal rules of skill (for finding means to [26] purposes), but then they are merely theoretical principles[3] (for example, how someone who would like to eat bread has to devise a mill). But practical precepts based on them can never be universal. For the determining ground of the faculty of desire is based on the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, which can never be assumed to be directed universally to the same objects.

But suppose that finite rational beings thought entirely alike, both about what they had to take as objects of their feelings of gratification or pain and even about the means they must use to attain the former and ward off the latter. Even then they could by no means pass off the *principle of self-love* as a practical law; for this unanimity would itself be merely contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and merely empirical, and would lack the necessity that is thought in every law—namely, objective necessity from grounds *a priori*. Unless, that is, one were to declare this necessity not practical at all but merely physical: that the action is forced out of us by our inclination just as inevitably as yawning is when we see others yawn. It would be more defensible to claim that there are no practical laws at all, only *counsels* on behalf of our desires, than to raise merely subjective principles to the rank of practical

3 KANT'S NOTE. Propositions that in mathematics or natural science are called *practical* should properly be called *technical*. For these disciplines have nothing whatever to do with determining the will; they merely indicate the manifold of possible action that is sufficient to bring about a certain effect, and so are just as theoretical as all propositions that state the connection of a cause with an effect. Whoever wants the effect must also be willing to be the cause.

laws—which must have thoroughly objective, not merely subjective, necessity, and must be cognized through reason *a priori*, not through experience (however empirically universal that may be). Even rules of uniform appearances are called laws of nature (the mechanical ones, for example) only if we either actually cognize them *a priori* or at least assume (as with the chemical ones) that they would be cognized *a priori* from objective grounds if our insight went deeper. But with merely subjective practical principles it is expressly made a condition that they must be based not on objective but on subjective conditions of choice, and hence that they may only ever be represented as mere maxims, never as practical laws. This last remark looks at first sight like mere hair-splitting. But it gives verbal definition to the most important distinction that can ever come under consideration in practical inquiries.

THEOREM III: THE FORM OF LAW

Maxims can be thought as universal laws only through their form, not their matter.

[27] If a rational being is to think of its maxims as practical universal laws, it can think of them only as principles that contain the determining ground of the will not by their matter but merely by their form.

The matter of a practical principle is the object of the will. This object either is the determining ground of the will or it is not. If it is, the rule of the will would be subject to an empirical condition (the relation of the determining representation to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure), and so would not be a practical law. Now if we abstract from a law all matter, that is, every object of the will (as determining ground), nothing is left but the mere form of a universal lawgiving. So a rational being either cannot think of *its* subjectively practical principles, that is, its maxims, as at the same time universal laws at all, or it must assume that their mere form, by which they are *fit for universal lawgiving*, of itself alone makes them practical laws.

THE DEPOSIT EXAMPLE

A maxim of denying an unprovable deposit destroys itself when made a universal law.

Which form in a maxim is fit for universal lawgiving and which is not, the commonest understanding can tell without instruction. Suppose, for example, I have made it my maxim to increase my wealth by every safe means. Now I have a *deposit* in my hands whose owner has died without leaving any written record of it. Naturally, this is a case for my maxim. Now I want only to know whether that maxim could also hold as a universal practical law. So I apply it to the present case and ask whether it could take the form of a law, and hence whether I could through my maxim at the same time give such a law as this: that everyone may deny having received a *deposit* when no one can prove it was made.[4] I at once become aware that such a principle, as a law, would destroy itself, because it would bring it about that there were no *deposits* at all. A practical law that I recognize as such must qualify for universal lawgiving; this is an identical proposition and therefore clear in itself. Now if I say that my will is subject to a practical *law*, I cannot cite my inclination (in the present case, for instance, my greed) as its determining ground, one fit [28] for a universal practical law. For far from being fit for universal lawgiving, my inclination, put in the form of a universal law, must rather wear itself away.

It is therefore astonishing how intelligent men could have thought of passing off the desire for happiness as a universal *practical law*, on the ground that this desire is universal, and so too the *maxim* by which each person makes happiness the determining ground of his will. For whereas a universal law of nature otherwise makes everything harmonious, here, if one tried to give the maxim the universality of a law, the very opposite of harmony would follow: the worst conflict, and the com-

4 Kant uses the Latin legal term Depositum: property entrusted to someone for safekeeping, to be returned on demand.

plete destruction of the maxim itself and of its purpose. For then the will of all does not have one and the same object; each has his own (his own well-being). This may, by chance, also be compatible with the purposes of others, who likewise direct them toward themselves; but it is far from sufficient for a law, because the exceptions one is occasionally entitled to make are endless and cannot be determinately comprised in one universal rule. What results in this way is a harmony like the one a certain satirical poem depicts in the concord of soul between a married couple bent on ruin: *Oh, what wondrous harmony, what he wants, she wants too*, and so on; or like what is told of the pledge King *Francis* the First made against Emperor *Charles* the Fifth: "What my brother Charles wants to have (Milan), I want to have too." Empirical determining grounds are of no use for any universal external lawgiving, but just as little for internal lawgiving. For each person makes his own self the subject on which inclination is based, and another person another subject; and within each subject itself, now one inclination and now another has the stronger influence.[5] To discover a law that would govern them all under this condition, namely with agreement on all sides, is absolutely impossible.

PROBLEM I: A WILL DETERMINED BY FORM

A will determinable by the mere lawgiving form of maxims must be a free will.

Supposing that the mere lawgiving form of maxims is by itself the sufficient determining ground of a will: to find the character of the will that is determinable by that form alone.

The mere form of law can be represented only by reason; so it is no object of the senses and consequently does not belong among appearances. Hence the representation of this form as the determining ground of the will is distinct from all determining grounds of events in nature according to the law of causality,

5 Francis I of France (1494–1547) and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500–1558) fought repeatedly over the Duchy of Milan.

[29] because in their case the determining grounds must themselves be appearances. But if no determining ground of the will other than that universal lawgiving form can serve it as a law, then such a will must be thought of as wholly independent of the natural law of appearances in their relation to one another, namely the law of causality. Such independence, however, is called *freedom* in the strictest, that is, the transcendental, sense. Therefore a will for which the mere lawgiving form of the maxim can alone serve as a law is a free will.

PROBLEM II: THE LAW OF A FREE WILL

A free will can be determined only by the lawgiving form contained in its maxim.

Supposing that a will is free: to find the law that alone is fit to determine it necessarily.

The matter of the practical law, that is, an object of the maxim, can never be given except empirically; yet the free will, as independent of empirical conditions (that is, conditions belonging to the world of sense), must nevertheless be determinable. So a free will must find a determining ground in the law, but independently of the *matter* of the law. Besides the matter of the law, however, nothing more is contained in the law than the lawgiving form. So the lawgiving form, insofar as it is contained in the maxim, is the only thing that can constitute a determining ground of the will.

FREEDOM AND THE MORAL LAW

Our knowledge of freedom starts from the moral law; the gallows example shows we can because we ought.

Freedom and unconditional practical law thus point reciprocally to each other. I do not ask here whether they are in fact different, and whether an unconditional law is not rather merely the self-consciousness of a pure practical reason, and this in turn entirely the same as the positive concept of freedom. I ask rather where our *cognition* of the unconditionally practical

starts: from freedom or from the practical law. It cannot start from freedom. For we can neither become immediately conscious of freedom, since our first concept of it is negative, nor infer it from experience, since experience lets us cognize only the law of appearances, and hence the mechanism of nature, the direct opposite of freedom. It is therefore the *moral law*, of which we become immediately conscious (as soon as we draw up maxims of the will for ourselves), that *first* presents itself to us. And since reason [30] presents it as a determining ground that no sensible conditions can outweigh, indeed as wholly independent of them, it leads directly to the concept of freedom. But how is consciousness of that moral law itself possible? We can become conscious of pure practical laws just as we are conscious of pure theoretical principles: by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us, and to the setting aside of all empirical conditions to which reason directs us. The concept of a pure will arises from the former, just as the consciousness of a pure understanding arises from the latter. That this is the true subordination of our concepts—that morality first discloses the concept of freedom to us, and hence that *practical reason* first confronts speculative reason, through this concept, with the most insoluble problem, so as to put it in the greatest perplexity—is clear already from the following. Nothing in appearances can be explained from the concept of freedom; there the mechanism of nature must always be the guiding thread. Moreover, when pure reason tries to ascend to the unconditioned in the series of causes, its antinomy entangles it in the incomprehensible on the one side just as much as on the other, although the latter (mechanism) is at least of use in explaining appearances. So no one would ever have ventured to introduce freedom into science, had not the moral law, and with it practical reason, come along and forced this concept upon us. Experience, too, confirms this order of concepts in us. Suppose someone claims that his lustful inclination is quite irresistible to him whenever the desired object and the opportunity present themselves. Ask him whether, if a gallows were set up in front of

the house where he finds this opportunity, so that he would be strung up on it immediately after enjoying his pleasure, he would not then master his inclination. One need not guess for long what he would answer. But ask him whether, if his prince demanded, on threat of the same immediate death penalty, that he give false testimony against an honest man whom the prince would like to ruin under some plausible pretext, he would consider it possible, however great his love of life may be, to overcome that love. Whether he would do it or not, he will perhaps not venture to say; but that it is possible for him he must admit without hesitation. He judges, therefore, that he can do something because he is conscious that he ought to do it, and he recognizes in himself the freedom that, without the moral law, would otherwise have remained unknown to him.

FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

Act so that the maxim of your will could always hold as a principle of universal lawgiving.

Act so that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of universal lawgiving.[6]

AN UNCONDITIONAL PRACTICAL RULE

Unlike geometry's postulates, the moral law commands unconditionally, through pure reason alone.

[31] Pure geometry has postulates as practical propositions; but these contain nothing more than the presupposition that one *can* do something if it should be demanded that one *ought* to do it, and they are the only propositions of geometry that concern an existence. They are therefore practical rules under a problematic condition of the will. Here, however, the rule says that one ought absolutely to act in a certain way. The practical rule is therefore unconditional, and so is represented *a priori* as a cat-

6 The fundamental law of pure practical reason (§ 7): Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative in this work.

egorically practical proposition, by which the will is objectively determined absolutely and immediately (by the practical rule itself, which is therefore a law here). For here pure *reason, practical in itself,* is immediately lawgiving. The will is thought of as independent of empirical conditions, and hence, as a pure will, as determined *by the mere form of law*; and this determining ground is regarded as the supreme condition of all maxims. The thing is strange enough, and has no parallel in all the rest of practical cognition. For the *a priori* thought of a possible universal lawgiving, a thought that is therefore merely problematic, is commanded unconditionally as a law, without borrowing anything from experience or from any external will.

THE FACT OF REASON

Consciousness of the moral law is a fact of pure reason, not derived from any prior datum.

But neither is it a precept according to which an action ought to be done by which a desired effect is possible (for then the rule would always be physically conditioned). It is rather a rule that determines the will *a priori* merely with respect to the form of its maxims. And then it is at least not impossible to think of a law that serves merely for the *subjective* form of principles as a determining ground through the *objective* form of a law in general. We may call the consciousness of this fundamental law a fact of reason, because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason—for example,[7] from the consciousness of freedom (for this is not given to us beforehand). Rather, it forces itself upon us of its own accord as a synthetic proposition *a priori* that is based on no intuition, either pure or empirical. It would indeed be analytic if one presupposed freedom of the will; but for that, freedom as a positive concept would require an intellectual intuition, which we may not assume here at all. Still, in order to regard this law without misinterpretation as

7 Fact of reason (Faktum der Vernunft): Kant's term for our consciousness of the moral law as something given, not derived from any prior premise.

given, one must note well that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason, which thereby announces itself as originally lawgiving (*sic volo, sic jubeo* [as I will, so I command]).[8]

PURE REASON IS PRACTICAL BY ITSELF

Pure reason gives a universal law, the moral law, to every rational being.

Pure reason is practical by itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law, which we call the *moral law*.

HOLINESS AND DUTY

For finite beings the law is an imperative and obligation; only a holy will stands above duty.

[32] The fact just mentioned is undeniable. One need only analyze the judgment people pass on the lawfulness of their actions, and one will always find that, whatever inclination may say in between, their reason, incorruptible and self-constrained, always holds the maxim of the will in an action up against the pure will, that is, against itself, regarding itself as *a priori* practical. Now this principle of morality, precisely because of the universality of the lawgiving that makes it the formal supreme determining ground of the will regardless of all its subjective differences, is declared by reason at the same time to be a law for all rational beings, insofar as they have a will at all, that is, a faculty of determining their causality through the representation of rules—and hence insofar as they are capable of actions according to principles, and consequently also according to practical principles *a priori* (for these alone have the necessity that reason demands for a principle). It is therefore not restricted to human beings alone but extends to all finite beings that have reason and will, and indeed even includes the infinite being as the supreme intelligence. In the former case, however,

8 From Juvenal, Satires 6.223, where a domineering wife overrides every objection by sheer will.

the law has the form of an imperative. For in a human being, as a rational being, we can indeed presuppose a *pure* will, but as a being affected by needs and sensible motives we cannot presuppose a *holy* will, that is, one incapable of any maxims conflicting with the moral law. For finite beings, therefore, the moral law is an *imperative* that commands categorically, because the law is unconditional. The relation of such a will to this law is *dependence*, under the name of obligation. Obligation signifies a *necessitation* to an action, though only through mere reason and its objective law; and this action is therefore called *duty*. It is so called because a pathologically affected choice (though not thereby determined, and hence always free) carries with it a wish arising from *subjective* causes, which can therefore often run counter to the pure objective determining ground. Such a choice thus needs, as moral necessitation, a resistance on the part of practical reason, which may be called an inner but intellectual constraint. In the all-sufficient intelligence, choice is rightly represented as incapable of any maxim that could not at the same time be objectively a law. The concept of *holiness*, which belongs to it for that reason, sets it, not indeed above all practical laws, but above all practically restricting laws, and hence above obligation and duty. This holiness of will is nonetheless a practical idea, which must necessarily serve as a *model*; to approach this model endlessly is the only thing open to all finite rational beings. The pure moral law, which is itself called holy for this reason, holds it constantly and rightly before their eyes. To be sure of this endlessly continuing progress [33] of one's maxims, and of their steadfastness in constant advance, that is, virtue, is the highest that finite practical reason can achieve. And virtue itself, in turn, can never be complete, at least as a naturally acquired capacity, because in such a case assurance never becomes apodictic certainty, and as mere persuasion it is very dangerous.

THEOREM IV: AUTONOMY

Autonomy of the will is the sole principle of morality; heteronomy grounds no obligation.

The *autonomy* of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of the duties that conform to them. All *heteronomy* of choice, on the other hand, not only grounds no obligation at all but is rather opposed to the principle of obligation and to the morality of the will. For the sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of the law (namely, from a desired object), together with the determination of choice through the mere universal lawgiving form of which a maxim must be capable. That *independence*, however, is freedom in the *negative* sense, while this *lawgiving of its own* by pure and, as such, practical reason is freedom in the *positive* sense. Thus the moral law expresses nothing other than the *autonomy* of pure practical reason, that is, of freedom; and this autonomy is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can agree with the supreme practical law. If, therefore, the matter of volition—which can be nothing other than the object of a desire that is connected with the law—enters into the practical law *as a condition of its possibility*, the result is heteronomy of choice, namely dependence on the natural law of following some impulse or inclination. The will then does not give itself the law, but only the precept for rationally following pathological laws. And a maxim that in this way can never contain the universally lawgiving form not only establishes no obligation, but is itself opposed to the principle of a *pure* practical reason, and hence also to the moral disposition, even if the action arising from it should conform to the law.

MATTER AND FORM OF MAXIMS

Others' happiness may be willed, but only the form of law can make it an obligation.

[34] Thus a practical precept that carries with it a material (and hence empirical) condition must never be counted as a practical law. For the law of the pure will, which is free, places that will in a sphere entirely different from the empirical; and the necessity the law expresses, since it is not supposed to be a necessity of nature, can consist only in formal conditions of the possibility of a law in general. All matter of practical rules always rests on subjective conditions, which give it no universality for rational beings except a merely conditional one (in case I *desire* this or that, what I would then have to do to make it actual); and they all revolve around the principle of *one's own happiness*. Now it is certainly undeniable that all volition must also have an object, and hence a matter. But that is no reason why the matter should be the determining ground and condition of the maxim. For if it is, the maxim cannot be presented in universally lawgiving form. The expectation of the object's existence would then be the determining cause of choice, and the dependence of the faculty of desire on the existence of some thing would have to be laid at the basis of volition. This dependence can only ever be sought in empirical conditions, and therefore can never provide the ground for a necessary and universal rule. Thus the happiness of other beings can be the object of the will of a rational being. But if it were the determining ground of the maxim, one would have to presuppose that we find in the well-being of others not only a natural gratification but also a need, such as the sympathetic temperament of human beings brings with it. This need, however, I cannot presuppose in every rational being (in God not at all). So the matter of the maxim can indeed remain, but it must not be the maxim's condition, for otherwise the maxim would not be fit for a law. Thus the mere form of a law, which limits the matter, must at the same time be a ground for

adding this matter to the will, but not for presupposing it. Let the matter be, for example, my own happiness. If I ascribe this to everyone (as I may indeed do in the case of finite beings), it can become an *objective* practical law only if I include the happiness of others in it as well. So the law of promoting the happiness of others does not arise from the presupposition that this is an object of everyone's choice. It arises solely from this: that the form of universality, which reason needs as the condition for giving a maxim of self-love the objective validity of a law, becomes the determining ground of the will. So the object (the happiness of others) was not the determining ground of the pure will. The mere lawful form alone was that ground, through which I limited my maxim, based on inclination, in order to give it the universality [35] of a law and so make it suited to pure practical reason. From this limitation alone, and not from the addition of an external incentive, could the concept of *obligation* then arise—the obligation to extend the maxim of my self-love to the happiness of others as well.

MORALITY AGAINST SELF-INTEREST

The principle of one's own happiness is the direct opposite of morality, as ordinary judgment sees.

The direct opposite of the principle of morality is to make the principle of *one's own* happiness the determining ground of the will. And, as I showed above, to this must be counted everything whatever that places the determining ground that is to serve as a law anywhere other than in the lawgiving form of the maxim. This conflict, however, is not merely logical, like that between empirically conditioned rules that someone nevertheless wanted to raise to necessary principles of cognition. It is practical, and it would utterly ruin morality were the voice of reason in relation to the will not so distinct, so impossible to shout down, so audible even to the most ordinary person. As it is, the conflict can survive only in the head-spinning speculations of the schools, which are bold enough to make themselves deaf to

that heavenly voice in order to uphold a theory that costs no racking of brains.

Suppose a friend whose company you otherwise enjoy tried to justify himself to you for having given false testimony. First he pleads what he calls the holy duty of one's own happiness; then he recounts all the advantages he has gained by it; he points out the prudence he has shown in making himself safe against all discovery, even discovery by you, to whom he reveals the secret only so that he can deny it at any time. And then, in all seriousness, he claims to have performed a genuine human duty. You would either laugh in his face or recoil from him in disgust—even though, if someone has steered his principles merely by his own advantage, you would not have the slightest objection to these tactics. Or suppose someone recommends to you a man as a steward, to whom you could blindly entrust all your affairs. To inspire your confidence, he praises him as a prudent man with a masterly grasp of his own advantage, and as a tirelessly active one who lets no opportunity for it go unused. Finally, so that no worries about any vulgar self-interest on his part should stand in the way, he praises the refinement of the man's way of life: he seeks his pleasure not in amassing money or in coarse luxury, but in widening his knowledge, in well-chosen and instructive company, even in doing good to the needy. As for the means, however (which after all borrow their worth or worthlessness only from the end), he is not scrupulous, and other people's money and goods are as good as his own for this purpose, [36] as soon as he knows he can use them undetected and unhindered. You would believe either that the person recommending him was making fun of you or that he had lost his mind. — So clearly and sharply are the boundaries between morality and self-love drawn that even the most ordinary eye cannot possibly fail to tell whether something belongs to the one or the other. The few remarks that follow may seem superfluous for so obvious a truth, but they at least serve to give the judgment of common human reason somewhat more distinctness.

The principle of happiness can indeed yield maxims, but never maxims fit to be laws of the will, even if one made *universal* happiness one's object. For since knowledge of it rests on nothing but data of experience, and since every judgment about it depends very much on each person's opinion, which is moreover itself very changeable, it can indeed give *general* rules, but never *universal* ones—that is, rules that hold most often on average, but not rules that must be valid always and necessarily. Hence no practical *laws* can be based on it. Precisely because an object of choice is here made the basis of the rule of choice, and so must precede it, the rule cannot be referred to or based on anything but what commends itself to one, and hence on experience; and there the diversity of judgment must be endless. This principle therefore does not prescribe the very same practical rules to all rational beings, even though these rules fall under a common heading, namely that of happiness. The moral law, however, is thought of as objectively necessary only because it is to hold for everyone who has reason and will.

The maxim of self-love (prudence) merely *advises*; the law of morality *commands*. And there is a great difference between what we are *advised* to do and what we are *obligated* to do.

What is to be done according to the principle of autonomy of choice is quite easy for the most ordinary understanding to see without hesitation; what is to be done on the presupposition of heteronomy of choice is hard to see and requires knowledge of the world. That is, what *duty* is presents itself to everyone of its own accord; but what brings true, lasting advantage is always shrouded in impenetrable darkness, if that advantage is to extend over one's whole existence. It takes much prudence even to adapt the practical rule geared to it, by skillful exceptions, in a tolerable way to the ends of life. Yet the moral law commands everyone to obey it, and indeed to obey it most punctiliously. So judging what is to be done according to it must not be so hard that even the most ordinary and unpracticed understanding, without any worldly prudence, would not know how to go about it.

To satisfy the categorical command of morality is within everyone's power [37] at all times; to satisfy the empirically conditioned precept of happiness is possible only seldom, and far from possible for everyone, even with regard to a single aim. The reason is that in the former case everything depends only on the maxim, which must be genuine and pure, whereas in the latter it also depends on one's powers and physical ability to make a desired object actual. A command that everyone should seek to make himself happy would be foolish; for one never commands anyone to do what he already inevitably wants of his own accord. One would have to command him merely the measures to take—or rather offer them to him, since he cannot do everything he wants. But to command morality under the name of duty is entirely reasonable. For, in the first place, not everyone is glad to obey its precept when it conflicts with his inclinations. And as for the measures by which he can follow this law, they need not be taught here; for in this respect, whatever he wills, he also can do.

Someone who has *lost* at gambling may well be *annoyed* with himself and his imprudence. But if he is conscious of having *cheated* at gambling (even though he won by it), he must *despise* himself as soon as he compares himself with the moral law. So this law must surely be something other than the principle of one's own happiness. For having to say to oneself, "I am a *worthless wretch*, though I have filled my purse," must have a different standard of judgment from applauding oneself and saying, "I am a *prudent* man, for I have enriched my coffers."

Finally, there is something else in the idea of our practical reason that accompanies the transgression of a moral law, namely that it *deserves punishment*. Now a share in happiness simply cannot be combined with the concept of punishment as such. For although the one who punishes may well have the kindly intention of directing the punishment toward this end as well, it must first be justified by itself as punishment, that is, as mere harm. The one punished, if matters rested there and he could see no favor hidden behind this harshness, must himself

admit that he got what was right and that his lot perfectly fits his conduct. In every punishment as such there must first be justice, and this constitutes the essence of the concept. Kindness can indeed be combined with it, but the one who deserves punishment has, given his conduct, not the slightest reason to count on it. Punishment is thus a physical ill which, even if it were not connected with moral evil as a *natural* consequence, would still have to be connected with it as a consequence according to principles of a moral lawgiving. Now if every crime, even without regard to its physical consequences for the perpetrator, is punishable in itself, that is, forfeits happiness (at least in part), it would obviously be absurd to say that the crime consisted precisely in his having brought a punishment on himself by damaging his own [38] happiness (which, on the principle of self-love, would have to be the proper concept of all crime). In this way punishment would be the ground for calling something a crime, and justice would rather have to consist in refraining from all punishment and even preventing natural punishment. For then there would no longer be anything evil in the action, since the ills that would otherwise follow from it, and on account of which alone the action was called evil, would now be averted. But to regard all punishing and rewarding merely as the machinery in the hand of a higher power, serving only to set rational beings in motion toward their final aim (happiness), is so obviously a mechanism of their will that abolishes all freedom that we need not dwell on it here.

Subtler still, though just as untrue, is the claim of those who assume a certain special moral sense which, rather than reason, determines the moral law, and by which the consciousness of virtue is immediately connected with contentment and pleasure, and that of vice with unrest of soul and pain. They thus still make everything depend on the desire for one's own happiness. Without bringing in here what was said above, I want only to point out the illusion that takes place in this. In order to represent the vicious person as tormented by unrest of mind through consciousness of his offenses, they must already represent him

in advance as morally good, at least to some degree, in the most basic foundation of his character; just as they must already represent the person who is delighted by consciousness of dutiful actions as virtuous beforehand. So the concept of morality and duty must, after all, have preceded all regard for this contentment, and cannot be derived from it at all. One must first value the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate worth that obeying it gives a person in his own eyes, in order to feel that contentment in the consciousness of one's conformity to it, and the bitter reproach when one can accuse oneself of transgressing it. So one cannot feel this contentment or unrest of soul before cognizing obligation, and make them the basis of obligation. One must already be at least halfway an honest man even to be able to form a representation of those feelings. For the rest, I do not at all deny that, just as the human will is immediately determinable by the moral law by virtue of freedom, so too frequent practice in accordance with this determining ground can in the end subjectively produce a feeling of contentment with oneself. On the contrary, it is itself a duty to establish and cultivate this feeling, which alone really deserves to be called the moral feeling. But the concept of duty cannot be derived from it. Otherwise we would have to think of a feeling of a law as such, and make an object of sensation [39] of what can only be thought through reason. If this were not to become a flat contradiction, it would entirely abolish every concept of duty and put in its place merely a mechanical play of subtler inclinations, sometimes at odds with the coarser ones.

Now if we compare our *formal* supreme principle of pure practical reason (as an autonomy of the will) with all the *material* principles of morality proposed so far, we can present all the others in a table as such—a table in which all other possible cases besides the single formal one are actually exhausted at the same time—and so prove at a glance that it is futile to look around for any principle other than the one now presented. — All possible determining grounds of the will are, namely, either

merely *subjective* and therefore empirical, or else *objective* and rational; and both are either *external* or *internal*.

TABLE OF MATERIAL PRINCIPLES

Kant classifies all earlier principles of morality and shows each is material and unfit for law.

[40] Subjective. External: Of education (according to Montaigne). Of the civil constitution (according to Mandeville). Internal: Of physical feeling (according to Epicurus). Of moral feeling (according to Hutcheson). Objective. Internal: Of perfection (according to Wolff and the Stoics). External: Of the will of God (according to Crusius and other theological moralists).[9]

[41] Those on the left side are all empirical and are obviously quite unfit to be the universal principle of morality. But those on the right side are based on reason (for perfection as a *property* of things, and the highest perfection represented in *substance*, that is, God, can both be thought only through concepts of reason). The first concept, however, that of *perfection*, can be taken either in a *theoretical* sense, and then it means nothing but the completeness of each thing in its kind (transcendental perfection), or of a thing merely as a thing in general (metaphysical perfection); and that is not at issue here. But the concept of perfection in the *practical* sense is the fitness or adequacy of a thing for all sorts of ends. This perfection as a *property* of the human being, and so an internal one, is nothing other than *talent*, together with what strengthens or supplements talent, *skill*. The highest perfection in *substance*, that is, God, and so an external one, is (considered from a practical point of view) the adequacy of this being for all ends whatever. Now ends must first be given to us, in relation to which alone the concept of *perfection* (whether an internal perfection in ourselves or an external one in God) can

9 Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), French essayist; Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), author of The Fable of the Bees; Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), Scottish moral-sense philosopher; Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and Christian August Crusius (1715–1775), German rationalist philosophers.

become the determining ground of the will. But an end, as an *object* that must precede the determination of the will by a practical rule and contain the ground of the possibility of such a rule —hence the *matter* of the will, taken as its determining ground— is always empirical. It can therefore serve the *Epicurean* principle of the doctrine of happiness, but never the pure rational principle of the doctrine of morals and of duty. (Thus talents and their cultivation can become motives of the will only because they contribute to the advantages of life; and the will of God, if agreement with it is taken as the object of the will without any antecedent practical principle independent of the idea of God, can become a motive only through the *happiness* we expect from it.) It follows, *first*, that all the principles set out here are *material*; *second*, that they comprise all possible material principles; and from this, finally, the conclusion: that, since material principles are wholly unfit for the supreme moral law (as has been proved), the *formal practical principle* of pure reason —according to which the mere form of a universal lawgiving possible through our maxims must constitute the supreme and immediate determining ground of the will—is the *only possible* principle fit for categorical imperatives, that is, for practical laws (which make actions duties), and in general for the principle of morality, both in judging and in applying it to the human will in determining that will.

DEDUCTION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

The moral law cannot be deduced, but it serves instead to deduce and establish freedom.

[42] This Analytic shows that pure reason can be practical, that is, can determine the will by itself, independently of everything empirical. It shows this, moreover, through a fact in which pure reason actually proves itself practical in us: namely, autonomy in the principle of morality, by which reason determines the will to the deed. — It shows at the same time that this fact is inseparably bound up with the consciousness of freedom of the

will, indeed is identical with it. Through this consciousness the will of a rational being—which, as belonging to the world of sense, recognizes itself as necessarily subject to the laws of causality like other efficient causes—is nevertheless, in practical matters, at the same time conscious from another side, namely as a being in itself, of its existence as determinable in an intelligible order of things. It is conscious of this not through any special intuition of itself, but in accordance with certain dynamic laws that can determine its causality in the world of sense. For that freedom, if it is ascribed to us, transfers us into an intelligible order of things has been sufficiently proved elsewhere.

If we now compare this with the analytic part of the critique of pure speculative reason, a remarkable contrast between the two appears. There it was not principles but pure sensible *intuition* (space and time) that was the first datum, making cognition *a priori* possible—and only for objects of the senses.—Synthetic principles from mere concepts without intuition were impossible; rather, they could occur only in relation to intuition, which was sensible, and hence only in relation to objects of possible experience, because the concepts of the understanding, combined with this intuition, alone make possible the cognition we call experience.—Beyond objects of experience, and so with regard to things as noumena, speculative reason was quite rightly denied everything positive in the way of *cognition*. — Yet speculative reason did achieve this much: it made secure the concept of noumena, that is, the possibility, indeed the necessity, of thinking them. For example, it rescued the assumption of freedom, considered negatively, as entirely compatible with those principles and limitations of pure theoretical reason, against all [43] objections—without, however, letting us cognize anything determinate or extending about such objects, since it rather cut off all prospect of them entirely.

The moral law, by contrast, even if it gives us no *prospect* into that world, nonetheless provides a fact that is utterly inexplicable from all the data of the sensible world and from the whole range of our theoretical use of reason. This fact points to a pure

world of understanding; indeed, it even *determines* that world *positively* and lets us know something of it, namely a law.

This law is to give the sensible world, as a *sensible nature* (so far as rational beings are concerned), the form of a world of understanding, that is, of a *supersensible nature*, yet without infringing on the mechanism of the former. Now nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws. The sensible nature of rational beings in general is their existence under empirically conditioned laws, and so, for reason, *heteronomy*. The supersensible nature of these same beings, on the other hand, is their existence according to laws that are independent of every empirical condition and therefore belong to the *autonomy* of pure reason. And since the laws according to which the existence of things depends on cognition are practical, supersensible nature, so far as we can form a concept of it, is nothing other than *a nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason*. But the law of this autonomy is the moral law. The moral law is therefore the fundamental law of a supersensible nature and of a pure world of understanding, whose counterpart is to exist in the sensible world, yet without at the same time infringing on the laws of the sensible world. The former could be called the *archetypal* nature (*natura archetypa*), which we know only in reason; the latter, because it contains the possible effect of the idea of the former as determining ground of the will, could be called the ectypal, or copied, nature (*natura ectypa*).[10] For the moral law does in fact transport us, in idea, into a nature in which pure reason, if it were accompanied by a physical power adequate to it, would produce the highest good; and it determines our will to confer on the sensible world the form of a whole of rational beings.

That this idea really underlies the determinations of our will as a model, a pattern sketched in advance, as it were, is confirmed by the most ordinary attention to ourselves.

10 Archetype and ectype: the original model and the copy made from it; Kant uses the Latin pair to contrast the nature thought in reason with its image in the world of sense.

[44] When the maxim on which I intend to give testimony is tested by practical reason, I always consider what it would be like if it held as a universal law of nature. It is obvious that in this form it would compel everyone to truthfulness. For it cannot be consistent with the universality of a law of nature that statements should count as proof and yet be deliberately untrue. In the same way, the maxim I adopt concerning the free disposal of my life is determined at once when I ask myself what it would have to be for a nature to sustain itself according to a law of that maxim. Obviously no one in such a nature could end his life *at will*, for such an arrangement would not be a lasting natural order; and so in all other cases. But in actual nature, as an object of experience, the free will is not of itself determined to maxims that could by themselves found a nature according to universal laws, or that would of themselves fit into a nature arranged according to such laws. Rather, it is private inclinations that make up a natural whole according to pathological (physical) laws, but not a nature that would be possible only through our will according to pure practical laws. Nevertheless, through reason we are conscious of a law to which all our maxims are subject, as if a natural order had to arise from our will at the same time. This must therefore be the idea of a nature that is not empirically given and yet is possible through freedom, hence a supersensible nature, to which we give objective reality at least in a practical respect, because we regard it as the object of our will as pure rational beings.

The difference, then, between the laws of a nature *to which the will is subject* and those of a *nature that is subject to a will* (with regard to the will's relation to its free actions) rests on this. In the former, the objects must be causes of the representations that determine the will; in the latter, the will is to be the cause of the objects, so that its causality has its determining ground solely in the pure faculty of reason, which can therefore also be called a pure practical reason.

The two problems, then, are very different: how pure reason can, *on the one hand*, *cognize* objects *a priori*, and how it can, *on*

the other hand, be immediately a determining ground [45] of the will, that is, of the causality of a rational being with respect to the actuality of objects (merely through the thought of the universal validity of its own maxims as law).

The first, as belonging to the critique of pure speculative reason, requires that we first explain how intuitions are possible *a priori*—intuitions without which no object at all can be given to us, and so none can be synthetically cognized. Its solution turns out to be that all intuitions are merely sensible, and therefore permit no speculative cognition that goes further than possible experience reaches. Hence all the principles of that pure speculative reason accomplish nothing more than to make experience possible: experience either of given objects, or of objects that may be given without end but are never completely given.

The second, as belonging to the critique of practical reason, requires no explanation of how the objects of the faculty of desire are possible, for that is left, as a problem of the theoretical cognition of nature, to the critique of speculative reason. It requires only an explanation of how reason can determine the maxim of the will: whether this happens only by means of empirical representations as determining grounds, or whether pure reason too can be practical and be the law of a possible natural order that is not empirically cognizable at all. The possibility of such a supersensible nature, whose concept could at the same time be the ground of its actuality through our free will, needs no *a priori* intuition (of an intelligible world), which in this case, being supersensible, would in any event have to be impossible for us. For the only question is about the determining ground of volition in its maxims: whether it is empirical or a concept of pure reason (of reason's conformity to law in general), and how it can be the latter. Whether or not the causality of the will suffices for the actuality of the objects is left to the theoretical principles of reason to judge, as an inquiry into the possibility of the objects of volition; so the intuition of these objects forms no part at all of the practical problem. What matters here is only the determination of the will and the determin-

ing ground of its maxim as a free will, not the result. For provided the *will* conforms to law for pure reason, then however things may [46] stand with its *power* of execution, and whether or not, according to these maxims of legislation for a possible nature, such a nature actually arises from them—none of this concerns in the least the critique, which investigates whether and how pure reason can be practical, that is, can immediately determine the will.

In this business, then, the critique may without reproach—and indeed must—begin from pure practical laws and their actuality. Instead of intuition, however, it lays at their foundation the concept of their existence in the intelligible world, namely freedom. For this concept means nothing else; and those laws are possible only in relation to freedom of the will, but on the presupposition of freedom they are necessary; or, conversely, freedom is necessary because those laws are necessary as practical postulates. How this consciousness of moral laws—or, what comes to the same thing, the consciousness of freedom—is possible cannot be explained any further; its admissibility, however, can very well be defended in the theoretical critique.

The *exposition* of the supreme principle of practical reason has now been given. That is, it has been shown, first, what it contains—that it stands on its own, entirely *a priori* and independent of empirical principles—and then how it differs from all other practical principles. With the *deduction*, that is, the justification of its objective and universal validity and insight into the possibility of such a synthetic proposition *a priori*, we cannot hope to fare as well as we did with the principles of the pure theoretical understanding. For those principles referred to objects of possible experience, namely to appearances. And it could be proved that these appearances can be *cognized* as objects of experience only by being brought under the categories in accordance with those laws, and consequently that all possible experience must conform to these laws. But I cannot take such a route with the deduction of the moral law. For it concerns not cognition of the constitution of objects that may be given to

reason by some means or other from elsewhere, but a cognition insofar as it can itself become the ground of the existence of the objects, and through which reason has causality in a rational being—that is, pure reason, which can be regarded as a faculty that immediately determines the will.

But all human insight is at an end as soon as we have arrived at fundamental powers [47] or fundamental faculties. For their possibility cannot be comprehended through anything, yet it may just as little be invented and assumed at will. Hence in the theoretical use of reason only experience can entitle us to assume them. But this substitute—citing empirical proofs instead of a deduction from *a priori* sources of cognition—is also denied us here with respect to the faculty of pure practical reason. For whatever needs to draw the proof of its actuality from experience must depend, as to the grounds of its possibility, on principles of experience; and pure yet practical reason, by its very concept, cannot possibly be held to be anything of that kind. Moreover, the moral law is given, as it were, as a fact of pure reason, of which we are conscious *a priori* and which is apodictically certain, even supposing that no example of its being exactly followed could be found in experience. Thus the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proved by any deduction, by any exertion of theoretical reason, whether speculative or empirically supported; nor, even if one were willing to renounce its apodictic certainty, can it be confirmed by experience and so proved *a posteriori*. And yet it stands firm of itself.

But something different and quite paradoxical takes the place of this vainly sought deduction of the moral principle: namely, that the moral principle, conversely, itself serves as the principle for the deduction of an inscrutable faculty—one that no experience can prove, but that speculative reason had to assume at least as possible (in order to find, among its cosmological ideas, the unconditioned in the order of causality, so as not to contradict itself). This is the faculty of freedom. Of freedom the moral law, which itself needs no justifying grounds, proves not merely the possibility but the actuality, in beings who recognize

this law as binding on them. The moral law is in fact a law of causality through freedom, and thus of the possibility of a supersensible nature, just as the metaphysical law of events in the sensible world was a law of the causality of sensible nature. The moral law therefore determines what speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined—namely, the law for a causality whose concept was merely negative in speculative philosophy—and so for the first time provides this concept with objective reality.

[48] This kind of credential of the moral law—that it is itself put forward as a principle for the deduction of freedom as a causality of pure reason—is entirely sufficient in place of any *a priori* justification, since theoretical reason was compelled at least to *assume* the possibility of freedom in order to meet a need of its own. For the moral law proves its reality, in a way that satisfies even the critique of speculative reason, by adding a positive determination to a causality thought merely negatively—a causality whose possibility was incomprehensible to speculative reason, yet which it had to assume. This positive determination is the concept of a reason that determines the will immediately (through the condition of a universal lawful form of its maxims). In this way the moral law is able, for the first time, to give objective, though only practical, reality to reason, which always became extravagant with its ideas whenever it tried to proceed speculatively; and it turns reason's *transcendent* use into an *immanent* one (in which reason, through ideas, is itself an efficient cause in the field of experience).[11]

The determination of the causality of beings in the sensible world, as such, could never be unconditioned; and yet for every series of conditions there must necessarily be something unconditioned, and hence also a causality that determines itself entirely of itself. Therefore the idea of freedom, as a faculty of absolute spontaneity, was not a need but, *as far as its possibility is concerned*, an analytic principle of pure speculative reason. But it

11 *Extravagant* renders Kant's *überschwenglich* (literally "overflowing"): straying beyond the bounds of all possible experience.

is utterly impossible to give an example corresponding to this idea in any experience, because among the causes of things as appearances no determination of causality that would be absolutely unconditioned can be found. So we could only *defend* the *thought* of a freely acting cause, when we apply it to a being in the sensible world insofar as that being is, on the other side, also regarded as a noumenon. We did so by showing that there is no contradiction in regarding all its actions as physically conditioned, insofar as they are appearances, and yet at the same time regarding their causality, insofar as the acting being is a being of the understanding, as physically unconditioned, and so making the concept of freedom a regulative principle of reason. By this, it is true, I do not cognize at all what the object is to which such causality is ascribed; but I do remove the obstacle. For on the one hand, in explaining the events of the world, and hence also the actions of rational [49] beings, I do justice to the mechanism of natural necessity, which goes back from the conditioned to its condition without end; on the other hand, I keep open for speculative reason the place that for it is empty—namely, the intelligible—in order to put the unconditioned there. But I could not *realize* this *thought*, that is, I could not turn it into *cognition* of a being that acts in this way, not even merely as to its possibility. This empty place is now filled by pure practical reason with a determinate law of causality in an intelligible world (causality through freedom), namely the moral law. Speculative reason gains nothing by this as regards its insight; but it does gain as regards the *securing* of its problematic concept of freedom, which here acquires *objective* and, though only practical, nonetheless indubitable *reality*. Even the concept of causality—whose application, and hence also meaning, properly holds only in relation to appearances, so as to connect them into experiences (as the *Critique of Pure Reason* proves)—is not extended by pure practical reason so as to stretch its use beyond those limits. For if it set out to do that, it would have to try to show how the logical relation of ground and consequence could be used synthetically with a kind of intuition other than the sensible, that is,

how a *causa noumenon* [a cause as noumenon] is possible. This it cannot achieve at all; but as practical reason it takes no account of the question either. For it merely places the *determining ground* of the causality of the human being as a sensible being (which causality is given) *in pure reason* (which is therefore called practical). So it uses the concept of cause itself—from whose application to objects for the purpose of theoretical cognition it can here entirely abstract (since this concept is always found *a priori* in the understanding, even independently of all intuition)—not in order to cognize objects, but to determine causality with respect to objects in general, and so for no other than a practical purpose. It can therefore transfer the determining ground of the will into the intelligible order of things, while at the same time readily admitting that it does not understand at all what determination the concept of cause might have for the cognition of these things. Causality with respect to actions of the will in the sensible world it must, of course, cognize in a determinate way, for otherwise practical reason could not actually produce any deed. But the concept it forms of its own [50] causality as noumenon it need not determine theoretically for the purpose of cognizing its supersensible existence, and so need not be able to give that concept meaning in this respect. For the concept acquires meaning in any case, though only for practical use—namely, through the moral law. Even considered theoretically, it always remains a pure concept of the understanding, given *a priori*, which can be applied to objects whether they are given sensibly or not sensibly—although in the latter case it has no determinate theoretical meaning or application, but is merely a formal, yet essential, thought of the understanding about an object in general. The meaning that reason provides for it through the moral law is solely practical: namely, that the idea of the law of a causality (of the will) itself has causality, or is its determining ground.

THE EXTENSION OF PURE REASON IN PRACTICAL USE

Against Hume, Kant shows why causality may be applied to noumena, though only practically.

In the moral principle we have set up a law of causality that places the determining ground of this causality beyond all conditions of the sensible world. We have not merely *thought* the will—as determinable insofar as it belongs to an intelligible world—and hence the subject of this will (the human being) as belonging to a pure world of understanding, though in this respect as unknown to us (as could be done according to the critique of pure speculative reason). We have also *determined* the will with respect to its causality by means of a law that cannot be counted among any natural laws of the sensible world at all. And so we have *extended* our cognition beyond the limits of the sensible world—a pretension that the *Critique of Pure Reason* declared null in all speculation. How, then, is the practical use of pure reason here to be reconciled with its theoretical use, as regards determining the limits of its faculty?

David Hume, of whom it can be said that he really began the whole assault on the rights of a pure reason that made a thorough investigation of it necessary, reasoned as follows. The concept of [51] *cause* is a concept that contains the *necessity* of the connection of the existence of different things, and indeed insofar as they are different; so that if A is posited, I cognize that something quite different from it, B, must necessarily exist as well. But necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as it is cognized *a priori*; for experience would let us know only that a connection is, not that it is necessarily so. Now it is impossible, he says, to cognize *a priori* and as necessary the connection between one thing and *another* (or between one determination and another quite different from it), if they are not given in perception. Therefore the concept of a cause is itself fraudulent and deceptive. To put it most mildly, it is an illusion—excusable to this extent: that the *habit* (a *subjective* necessity) of per-

ceiving certain things or their determinations as frequently associated in their existence, side by side or in succession, is imperceptibly taken for an *objective* necessity of positing such a connection in the objects themselves. And so the concept of a cause has been obtained surreptitiously, not acquired rightfully; indeed it can never be acquired or authenticated, because it demands a connection that is in itself void, chimerical, and untenable before any reason, and to which no object can ever correspond. Thus, with respect to all cognition concerning the existence of things (mathematics therefore remained exempt for the time being), *empiricism* was first introduced as the sole source of principles—and with it, at the same time, the most rigorous *skepticism*, even with respect to the whole of natural science (as philosophy). For on such principles we can never *infer* a consequence from given determinations of things as regards their existence (since that would require the concept of a cause, which contains the necessity of such a connection). We can only expect, according to the rule of the imagination, cases similar to those before—an expectation, however, that is never certain, however often it may have been fulfilled. Indeed, of no event could one say that something *must* have preceded it on which it *necessarily* followed, that is, that it must have a *cause*. And so, however many cases one knew in which something of the kind preceded, so that a rule could be abstracted from them, one still could not on that account assume that things always and necessarily happen that way. One would thus have to grant blind chance, where all use of reason [52] ceases, its rights as well—and this firmly grounds skepticism with respect to inferences ascending from effects to causes, and makes it irrefutable.

Mathematics had so far come off well, because *Hume* held that its propositions were all analytic, that is, that they proceeded from one determination to another by virtue of identity, and hence according to the principle of contradiction. (But this is false: they are, rather, all synthetic. And although geometry, for example, has to do not with the existence of things but only with their determination *a priori* in a possible intuition, it non-

etheless passes, just as through causal concepts, from one determination A to a quite different one B, as nonetheless necessarily connected with the first.) But in the end that science, so highly praised for its apodictic certainty, must also succumb to *empiricism in principles*, for the same reason for which *Hume* put habit in place of objective necessity in the concept of cause. Despite all its pride, it must consent to scale down its bold claims, which command assent *a priori*, and to await approval of the universal validity of its propositions from the goodwill of observers. As witnesses, these would surely not refuse to admit that they had always perceived what the geometer propounds as principles in just that way, and would therefore allow that, even though it is not strictly necessary, one may go on expecting it to be so. In this way *Hume's* empiricism in principles also leads unavoidably to skepticism even with respect to mathematics, and consequently in every *scientific* theoretical use of reason (for this belongs either to philosophy or to mathematics). Whether the common use of reason (given so terrible an overthrow as we see befall the chief branches of knowledge) would come off any better, and would not rather be entangled even more irretrievably in this same destruction of all knowledge—and hence whether a *universal* skepticism must not follow from the same principles (one that would, to be sure, affect only scholars)—I leave everyone to judge for himself.

As for my own work in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: it was occasioned by that Humean doctrine of doubt, but went much further and took in the whole field of pure theoretical reason in its synthetic use, and hence also of what is called metaphysics [53] in general. With respect to the Scottish philosopher's doubts concerning the concept of causality, I proceeded as follows. If *Hume* took the objects of experience for *things in themselves* (as, after all, is done almost everywhere), he was quite right to declare the concept of cause deceptive and a false illusion. For in the case of things in themselves and their determinations as such, one cannot see how, because something A is posited, something else B must necessarily be posited as well; and so he could not possibly

admit such an *a priori* cognition of things in themselves. Still less could this acute man allow the concept an empirical origin, since that flatly contradicts the necessity of connection that constitutes the essence of the concept of causality. So the concept was outlawed, and in its place stepped habit in observing the course of perceptions.

My investigations, however, showed that the objects we deal with in experience are by no means things in themselves, but merely appearances. They showed, further, that although in the case of things in themselves it cannot be seen at all—indeed it is impossible to see—how, if A is posited, it should be *contradictory* not to posit B, which is quite different from A (the necessity of the connection between A as cause and B as effect), it can nonetheless very well be thought that, as appearances, they must be necessarily connected *in one experience* in a certain way (for example, with respect to relations of time), and cannot be separated without *contradicting* the connection by means of which this experience is possible—the experience in which they are objects, and in which alone they are cognizable to us. And so it turned out in fact. I was able not only to prove the objective reality of the concept of cause with respect to objects of experience, but also to *deduce* it as an *a priori* concept because of the necessity of connection that it carries with it, that is, to establish its possibility from pure understanding without empirical sources. And so, having removed the empiricism of its origin, I was able to eradicate from the ground up that empiricism's inevitable consequence, namely skepticism—first with respect to natural science, and then also, since it follows for exactly the same reasons, with respect to mathematics, both of them sciences that refer to objects of possible experience—and with it the total [54] doubt about everything that theoretical reason claims to have insight into.

But how do matters stand with the application of this category of causality (and likewise of all the others, for without them no cognition of what exists can be achieved) to things that are not objects of possible experience but lie beyond its limit?

For I was able to deduce the objective reality of these concepts only with respect to *objects of possible experience*. But precisely this—that I have saved them even if only in this case, that I have shown that objects can nonetheless be *thought* through them, though not determined *a priori*—is what gives them a place in the pure understanding, from which they are referred to objects in general (sensible or not sensible). If anything is still lacking, it is the condition of the *application* of these categories, and in particular of the category of causality, to objects—namely, intuition. Where intuition is not given, it makes their application *for the purpose of theoretical cognition* of the object as noumenon impossible; and so, if anyone ventures on it, such application is entirely forbidden (as was also done in the *Critique of Pure Reason*). Meanwhile the objective reality of the concept always remains, and the concept can be used even of noumena, but without our being able to determine it theoretically in the least and thereby produce a cognition. For that this concept contains nothing impossible even in relation to an object was proved by the fact that its seat in the pure understanding was secured in all its application to objects of the senses. And even if afterward, when referred to things in themselves (which cannot be objects of experience), it is incapable of being determined so as to represent *a determinate object* for the purpose of theoretical cognition, it could still be capable of being determined for application to some other purpose (perhaps the practical). This would not be so if, as *Hume* held, this concept of causality contained something that it is impossible to think at all.

Now, to discover this condition for applying the concept in question to noumena, we need only look back at *why we are not content with applying it to objects of experience* but would like to use it of things in themselves as well. For it soon becomes clear that what makes this a necessity for us is not a theoretical but a practical aim. [55] For speculation, even if we succeeded in this, we would make no real gain in knowledge of nature, or in general with respect to any objects that may be given to us. At most we would take a long step from the sensibly conditioned (with

which we already have enough to do, staying with it and diligently traversing the chain of causes) to the supersensible, in order to complete and bound our cognition on the side of its grounds. Yet an infinite gulf would always remain unfilled between that boundary and what we know, and we would have listened more to idle inquisitiveness than to a thorough desire for knowledge.

But besides the relation in which the *understanding* stands to objects (in theoretical cognition), it also has a relation to the faculty of desire, which is therefore called the will—and called the pure will insofar as the pure understanding (which in such a case is called reason) is practical through the mere representation of a law. The objective reality of a pure will, or, what is the same, of a pure practical reason, is given *a priori* in the moral law, as it were through a fact; for that is what we may call a determination of the will that is unavoidable, even though it does not rest on empirical principles. But the concept of a will already contains the concept of causality, and hence the concept of a pure will contains the concept of a causality with freedom, that is, of a causality that is not determinable according to natural laws, and is consequently not capable of any empirical intuition as proof of its reality, but that nonetheless fully justifies its objective reality *a priori* in the pure practical law—though (as is easy to see) not for the theoretical but merely for the practical use of reason. Now the concept of a being that has free will is the concept of a *causa noumenon*. And we are already assured that this concept does not contradict itself by the following: the concept of a cause has arisen entirely from the pure understanding; its objective reality with respect to objects in general is at the same time secured by the deduction; and being in its origin independent of all sensible conditions, it is not of itself restricted to phenomena (unless a determinate theoretical use were to be made of it). It can therefore certainly be applied to things as pure beings of the understanding. But because no intuition can be put under this application—since intuition can only ever be sensible—*causa noumenon* is, with respect to the theoretical use

of reason, [56] a possible, thinkable, but nonetheless empty concept. Now, through this concept I do not claim to *know theoretically* the constitution of a being *insofar as* it has a *pure* will. It is enough for me merely to designate it as such a being by means of the concept, and hence only to connect the concept of causality with that of freedom (and with what is inseparable from freedom, the moral law as its determining ground). I am certainly entitled to do this by virtue of the pure, non-empirical origin of the concept of cause, since I consider myself authorized to make no other use of it than in relation to the moral law, which determines its reality, that is, to make only a practical use of it.

Had I, with *Hume*, deprived the concept of causality of objective reality in its theoretical use, not only with respect to things in themselves (the supersensible) but also with respect to objects of the senses, then it would have lost all meaning and been declared, as a theoretically impossible concept, entirely useless. And since no use can be made of nothing, the practical use of a *theoretically null* concept would have been quite absurd. But as it is, the concept of an empirically unconditioned causality is theoretically empty (without any intuition suited to it), yet always possible, and it refers to an undetermined object; and instead of an intuition, it is given meaning in the moral law, and hence in a practical relation. So although I have no intuition that would determine its objective theoretical reality, it nonetheless has real application, which can be exhibited *in concreto* [in concrete cases] in dispositions or maxims—that is, practical reality that can be specified. And this is sufficient to justify it even with respect to noumena.

But this objective reality of a pure concept of the understanding in the field of the supersensible, once introduced, now gives all the other categories objective reality as well—though always only insofar as they stand in *necessary* connection with the determining ground of the pure will (the moral law), and a reality of no other kind than one merely applicable in practice. Meanwhile it has not the least influence toward extending theoretical cognition of these objects, as insight into their nature

through pure reason. As we shall also find in what follows, these categories always relate only to beings as *intelligences*, and in them only to the relation of *reason* to the [57] *will*, and so always only to the *practical*; beyond that they lay claim to no cognition of such beings. Whatever other properties, belonging to the theoretical way of representing such supersensible things, might be drawn in along with them, are then all counted not as knowledge at all, but only as an entitlement (and for practical purposes even a necessity) to assume and presuppose them. This holds even where supersensible beings (such as God) are thought according to an analogy, that is, according to the pure relation of reason that we make practical use of with respect to sensible beings. And so, through this application to the supersensible, though only for a practical purpose, pure theoretical reason is not given the slightest encouragement to rove fanatically into the extravagant.[12]

12 *Fanatical* renders Kant's *schwärmen*, *Schwärmerei* (often translated "enthusiasm"): rapturous, self-deluding zeal that oversteps the limits of reason.

The object of pure practical reason

Good and evil, and the typic of moral judgment.

By the concept of an object of practical reason I understand the representation of an object as a possible effect through freedom. To be an object of practical cognition as such, therefore, signifies only the relation of the will to the action by which the object or its opposite would be made actual. And judging whether or not something is an object of *pure* practical reason is only distinguishing the possibility or impossibility of *willing* the action by which, if we had the power to do it (which experience must judge), a certain object would become actual. If the object is taken as the determining ground of our faculty of desire, then the *physical possibility* of the object through the free use of our powers must come before judging whether it is an object of practical reason or not. If, on the other hand, the law *a priori* can be regarded as the determining ground of the action, and hence the action as determined by pure practical reason, then the judgment whether or not something is an object of pure practical reason is entirely independent of comparison with our physical [58] power. The only question is whether we may *will* an action directed to the existence of an object, if that object were within our power. So the *moral possibility* of the action must come first; for here the determining ground of the action is not the object but the law of the will.

The sole objects of a practical reason are therefore those of *good* and *evil*. For by the former one understands a necessary object of the faculty of desire, and by the latter a necessary

object of the faculty of aversion—both, however, according to a principle of reason.

If the concept of the good is not to be derived from a preceding practical law but is rather to serve as its basis, then it can only be the concept of something whose existence promises pleasure and so determines the causality of the subject to produce it, that is, determines the faculty of desire. Now since it is impossible to see *a priori* which representation will be accompanied by *pleasure* and which by *displeasure*, it would be for experience alone to settle what is immediately good or evil. The property of the subject with reference to which alone this experience can be made is the *feeling* of pleasure and displeasure, as a receptivity belonging to inner sense. And so the concept of what is immediately good would apply only to that with which the sensation of *gratification* is immediately connected, and the concept of what is evil without qualification would have to be referred solely to what immediately arouses *pain*. But this already runs counter to linguistic usage, which distinguishes the *agreeable* from the *good* and the *disagreeable* from *evil*, and demands that good and evil always be judged by reason—hence through concepts that can be universally communicated—and not by mere sensation, which is restricted to individual subjects and their receptivity. Yet no pleasure or displeasure can of itself be connected immediately with any representation of an object *a priori*. So the philosopher who believed himself compelled to base his practical judgment on a feeling of pleasure would call *good* what is a *means* to the agreeable, and *evil* what is the cause of disagreeableness and pain; for judging the relation of means to ends certainly belongs to reason. But although reason alone is capable of seeing into the connection of means with their purposes (so that one could even define the will as the [59] faculty of ends, since ends are always determining grounds of the faculty of desire according to principles), the practical maxims that followed from the above concept of the good merely as a means would never contain as the object of the will anything good in itself, but always only something good *for something*. The good

would always be merely the useful, and that for which it is useful would always have to lie outside the will, in sensation. Now if this sensation, as agreeable sensation, had to be distinguished from the concept of the good, then there would be nothing immediately good at all; the good would have to be sought only in the means to something else, namely some agreeableness.

GOOD AND WELL-BEING, EVIL AND ILL

German distinguishes the good from well-being and evil from ill, which Latin bonum and malum blur.

There is an old formula of the schools: *nihil appetimus, nisi sub ratione boni*; *nihil aversamur, nisi sub ratione mali* [we desire nothing except under the aspect of the good; we shun nothing except under the aspect of the bad]. It is often used correctly, but often also in a way very damaging to philosophy. For the expressions *boni* and *mali* contain an ambiguity, owing to a limitation of the language, which makes them capable of a double sense. They therefore inevitably leave practical laws equivocal; and they force philosophy—which in using them can well be aware of the difference of concept under the same word, yet can find no special expressions for it—into subtle distinctions on which people afterward cannot agree, since the difference could not be marked directly by any suitable expression.[12]

The German language has the good fortune to possess expressions that do not allow this difference to be overlooked. For what the Latins name with a single word, *bonum*, it has two very different concepts and equally different expressions: for *bonum*,

1 KANT'S NOTE. Moreover, the expression *sub ratione boni* is itself ambiguous. For it can mean: we represent something to ourselves as good when and *because* we *desire* (will) it; but also: we desire something *because* we *represent it to ourselves as good*. So either desire is the determining ground of the concept of the object as a good, or the concept of the good is the determining ground of desiring (of the will). In the first case *sub ratione boni* would mean that we will something *under the idea* of the good; in the second, *in consequence of this idea*, which must precede willing as its determining ground.

2 A maxim of scholastic philosophy, ultimately derived from Aristotle: whatever we desire, we desire as some kind of good.

das Gute (the good) and *das Wohl* (well-being); for *malum*, *das Böse* (evil) and *das Übel* (ill), or *Weh* (woe). So [60] it makes for two quite different judgments whether, in an action, we consider its *good* and *evil*, or our *well-being* and *woe* (ill).[3] From this it already follows that the above psychological proposition is at the very least still quite uncertain if it is translated thus: we desire nothing except with regard to our *well-being* or *woe*. If, on the other hand, it is rendered thus: under the direction of reason we will nothing except insofar as we hold it to be good or evil, then it is indubitably certain and at the same time quite clearly expressed.

Well-being or *ill* always signifies only a relation to our state of *agreeableness* or *disagreeableness*, of gratification and pain; and if on that account we desire or shun an object, this happens only insofar as it is referred to our sensibility and to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure that it produces. *Good* or *evil*, however, always signifies a relation to the *will*, insofar as the will is determined by the *law of reason* to make something its object. For the will is never determined immediately by the object and its representation; it is a faculty of making a rule of reason the motive of an action (through which an object can become actual). Good or evil, then, properly refers to actions, not to the person's state of sensation. And if something were to be, or to be held, good or evil without qualification (and in every respect and without further condition), it would be only the manner of acting, the maxim of the will, and consequently the acting person himself as a good or evil human being, that could be so called—not a thing.

So people might laugh as much as they liked at the Stoic who, in the most violent pains of gout, cried out: "Pain, torment me as much as you will, I shall never admit that you are something evil (*κακον*, *malum* [evil])!" He was right all the same. It was an ill; he felt that, and his cry betrayed it. But he had no reason at all to concede that any evil attached to him because of it. For

3 English "evil" here means moral badness, while "ill" (harm, misfortune) and "woe" concern how we fare; the translation keeps this pairing fixed from here on.

pain does not diminish the worth of his person in the least, but only the worth of his condition. A single lie of which he had been conscious would have had to strike down his courage; but pain served only as an occasion to raise it, when he was conscious that he had not brought it on himself through any wrongful action and thereby made himself deserving of punishment.[4]

What we are to call good must, in every reasonable person's judgment, [61] be an object of the faculty of desire, and evil an object of aversion in everyone's eyes. Hence, for this judgment, reason is needed in addition to sense. So it is with truthfulness as opposed to lying, with justice as opposed to violence, and so on. But we can call something an ill that everyone must at the same time declare good, sometimes indirectly, sometimes even directly. Someone who has a surgical operation performed on himself no doubt feels it as an ill; but through reason he, and everyone, declares it good. But suppose someone who likes to tease and disturb peace-loving people at last meets his match and is sent off with a sound thrashing. This is certainly an ill; yet everyone approves of it and considers it good in itself, even if nothing further came of it. Indeed, even the one who receives it must recognize in his own reason that justice has been done to him, because he sees the proportion between faring well and acting well, which reason inevitably holds before him, here put exactly into practice.

Our well-being and woe do, of course, count for *a very great deal* in the judgment of our practical reason. And as far as our nature as sensible beings is concerned, *everything* depends on our *happiness*—provided this is judged, as reason above all requires, not by passing sensation but by the influence this contingency has on our whole existence and on our contentment with it. But *everything without exception* does not depend on it. The human being is a needy being insofar as he belongs to the sensible world, and to that extent his reason certainly has a commission from the side of sensibility that it cannot decline: to

4 The Stoic philosopher Posidonius (c. 135–51 BC); Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* 2.61) tells how he said this to pain during an attack of gout.

attend to sensibility's interest and to make practical maxims for itself, including maxims aimed at the happiness of this life and, where possible, of a future one as well. Yet he is not so completely an animal as to be indifferent to everything that reason says on its own account, and to use reason merely as a tool for satisfying his needs as a sensible being. For the fact that he has reason does not raise him in worth above mere animality at all if reason is only to serve him for the purpose that instinct performs in animals. Reason would then be merely a particular method that nature had used to equip the human being for the same end for which it has destined animals, without destining him for a higher [62] end. Given this arrangement that nature has once made for him, he certainly needs reason in order to keep his well-being and woe constantly in view. But beyond that he has it for a higher purpose as well. He is to take into consideration also what is good or evil in itself—about which pure reason alone, with no sensible interest whatsoever, can judge—and not only that: he is to distinguish this judgment entirely from the other one and make it the supreme condition of the latter.

In this judging of what is good and evil in itself, as distinguished from what can be so called only with reference to well-being or ill, the following points matter. Either a principle of reason is already thought, in itself, as the determining ground of the will, without regard to possible objects of the faculty of desire (and so merely through the lawful form of the maxim). In that case the principle is a practical law *a priori*, and pure reason is taken to be practical of itself. The law then determines the will *immediately*; the action in conformity with it is *good in itself*; and a will whose maxim always conforms to this law is good *absolutely*, *in every respect*, and is the *supreme condition of all good*. Or else a determining ground of the faculty of desire precedes the maxim of the will, one that presupposes an object of pleasure and displeasure, and hence something that *gratifies* or *pains*. Then the maxim of reason—to promote the former and avoid the latter—determines actions as good with reference to our inclination, and hence only mediately (with regard to some further

end, as means to it). Such maxims can then never be called laws, but they can nevertheless be called rational practical precepts. In the latter case the end itself, the gratification we seek, is not a *good* but a matter of *well-being*; not a concept of reason but an empirical concept of an object of sensation. The use of the means to it, however—that is, the action—is nonetheless called good (because rational deliberation is required for it). But it is called good not absolutely, only with reference to our sensibility, with respect to its feeling of pleasure and displeasure. And the will whose maxim is affected in this way is not a pure will; a pure will is directed only at that in which pure reason can be practical of itself.

THE PARADOX OF METHOD

Good and evil must be determined after and through the moral law, not before it.

This is the place to explain the paradox of method in a critique of practical reason: *namely, that the concept of* [63] *good and evil must not be determined before the moral law (for which, it would seem, it would even have to serve as the foundation), but only (as is done here) after it and by means of it*. For even if we did not know that the principle of morality is a pure law determining the will *a priori*, we should still, in order not to adopt principles quite for nothing (*gratis*), have to leave it at least *undecided* at the outset whether the will has merely empirical determining grounds or also pure ones *a priori*. For it runs against all the basic rules of philosophical procedure to assume as already decided the very thing that is first to be decided. Suppose, then, that we wanted to begin with the concept of the good in order to derive the laws of the will from it. This concept of an object (as a good one) would at the same time put forward that object as the sole determining ground of the will. Now since this concept had no practical law *a priori* as its standard, the touchstone of good or evil could be placed in nothing but the agreement of the object with our feeling of pleasure or displeasure. And the use of reason could con-

sist only in determining, on the one hand, this pleasure or displeasure in its whole connection with all the sensations of my existence, and, on the other, the means of procuring the object of that pleasure for myself. Now what accords with the feeling of pleasure can be settled only by experience. Yet the practical law, on this account, is supposed to be based on it as its condition. So the possibility of practical laws *a priori* would be excluded outright—because it was thought necessary first to find an object for the will whose concept, as that of a good, had to constitute the universal, though empirical, determining ground of the will. But what was really necessary first was to investigate whether there might not also be a determining ground of the will *a priori* (which could never have been found anywhere except in a pure practical law, and indeed only insofar as this law prescribes to maxims their mere lawful form, without regard to an object). But because an object, according to concepts of good and evil, had already been laid down as the basis of every practical law, while that object could be thought, without a preceding law, only according to empirical concepts, one had deprived oneself in advance of the possibility of even thinking a pure practical law. Whereas if one had [64] first investigated the latter analytically, one would have found that it is not the concept of the good, as an object, that determines and makes possible the moral law, but, conversely, the moral law that first determines and makes possible the concept of the good, insofar as it deserves this name absolutely.

This remark, which concerns only the method of the highest moral inquiries, is of importance. It explains at a stroke what occasioned all the errors of philosophers with regard to the supreme principle of morals. For they looked for an object of the will in order to make it the matter and the ground of a law (which was then to be the determining ground of the will not immediately, but by means of that object as related to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure). They ought instead to have searched first for a law that determined the will *a priori* and immediately, and only then, in accordance with the will,

determined the object. Now whether they placed this object of pleasure, which was to supply the supreme concept of the good, in happiness, in perfection, in moral feeling, or in the will of God, their principle was in every case heteronomy. They were bound to come up against empirical conditions for a moral law, because they could call their object, as the immediate determining ground of the will, good or evil only according to its immediate relation to feeling, which is always empirical. Only a formal law—that is, one that prescribes to reason nothing more than the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims—can be *a priori* a determining ground of practical reason.[5] The ancients, however, openly betrayed this error by directing their moral inquiry entirely to determining the concept of the *highest good*, and hence of an object, which they then intended to make the determining ground of the will in the moral law. But this is an object that can be presented as an object to a will already determined *a priori* by its form only much later—once the moral law has first been established on its own and justified as the immediate determining ground of the will. This is something we shall undertake in the Dialectic of pure practical reason. The moderns, among whom the question of the highest good seems to have fallen out of use, or at least to have become a side issue, hide the error just described (as in many other cases) behind vague words. [65] Yet one sees it peering out of their systems all the same, since it everywhere betrays a heteronomy of practical reason, from which a moral law commanding universally *a priori* can never arise.

CATEGORIES OF FREEDOM

Good and evil are modes of the category of causality, set out in a table of freedom.

Now the concepts of good and evil, as consequences of the *a priori* determination of the will, also presuppose a pure practical

principle, and hence a causality of pure reason. So they do not originally refer to objects in the way the pure concepts of the understanding, or categories of reason in its theoretical use, do (as determinations, say, of the synthetic unity of the manifold of given intuitions in one consciousness); rather, they presuppose these objects as given. They are, all of them, *modi* of a single category, namely that of causality—insofar as its determining ground consists in reason's representation of a law of that causality, a law which reason, as a law of freedom, gives to itself, thereby proving itself practical *a priori*.[6] Actions, however, stand *on the one hand* under a law that is not a law of nature but a law of freedom, and so belong to the conduct of intelligible beings; *on the other hand*, as events in the sensible world, they also belong to appearances. Hence the determinations of a practical reason can take place only with reference to the latter—and so in accordance with the categories of the understanding, but not with a view to a theoretical use of the understanding, bringing the manifold of (sensible) *intuition* under one consciousness *a priori*. They take place only in order to subject the manifold of *desires* to the unity of consciousness of a practical reason commanding in the moral law, or of a pure will *a priori*.

These *categories of freedom*—for so we will call them, in contrast to those theoretical concepts, which are categories of nature—have an obvious advantage over the latter. The categories of nature are only forms of thought, which designate objects in general only indeterminately, through universal concepts, for every intuition possible for us. The categories of freedom, by contrast, concern the determination of a *free choice*. No intuition exactly corresponding to such choice can be given, to be sure; but it has at its basis a pure practical law *a priori*, which is not the case with any concepts of the theoretical use of our cognitive faculty. So as practical elementary concepts they have at

5 Happiness, perfection, moral feeling, the will of God: Kant has in view respectively Epicurean and eudaemonist ethics, Wolff and the Stoics, Hutcheson's moral-sense theory, and theological voluntarism such as Crusius's.

6 *Modi* (Latin, plural of *modus*): modes, that is, specific forms or modifications.

their basis, as given, not the form of intuition (space and time), which does not lie in reason itself but must be taken from elsewhere, [66] namely from sensibility, but the *form of a pure will*, which lies in reason, and hence in the faculty of thinking itself; and the result is this. Since all precepts of pure practical reason are concerned only with the *determination of the will*, not with the natural conditions (of practical ability) for *carrying out its purpose*, the practical concepts *a priori*, in relation to the supreme principle of freedom, at once become cognitions and need not wait for intuitions in order to acquire meaning. And this for a remarkable reason: they themselves produce the reality of what they refer to (the disposition of the will)—which is not at all the business of theoretical concepts. Only one must note carefully that these categories concern practical reason in general only, and so proceed in their order from those that are still morally undetermined and sensibly conditioned to those that are sensibly unconditioned and determined solely by the moral law.

TABLE OF THE CATEGORIES OF FREEDOM

The categories of freedom are listed under quantity, quality, relation and modality.

1. *Of Quantity* Subjective, according to maxims (*opinions of the will* of the individual) Objective, according to principles (*precepts*) Principles of freedom both objective and subjective *a priori* (*laws*).[7]

2. *Of Quality* Practical rules of *commission* (*praeceptivae* [prescriptive]) Practical rules of *omission* (*prohibitivae* [prohibitive]) Practical rules of exceptions (*exceptivae* [exceptive]). 3. Of Relation To personality To the condition of the person Reciprocally, of one person to the condition of the other.

4. *Modality* The *permitted* and the *forbidden Duty* and what is *contrary to duty Perfect* and *imperfect duty*.

[67] One soon notices that in this table freedom is regarded as a kind of causality—one not subject, however, to empirical determining grounds—with respect to the actions it makes possible as appearances in the sensible world, and that it therefore refers to the categories of their natural possibility. At the same time each category is taken so universally that the determining ground of that causality can also be assumed outside the sensible world, in freedom as the property of an intelligible being. Finally the categories of modality introduce the transition from practical principles in general to those of morality—but only *problematically*. These principles of morality can afterwards be set out *dogmatically* only through the moral law.

I add nothing further here by way of explaining the present table, since it is intelligible enough by itself. A division of this kind, drawn up according to principles, is very beneficial to any science, for the sake of its thoroughness as well as its intelligibility. From the table above and its first number, for example, one knows at once where one must begin in practical deliberations: with the maxims that each person bases on his inclination; then the precepts that hold for a class of rational beings insofar as they agree in certain inclinations; and finally the law that holds for all regardless of their inclinations, and so on. In this way one surveys the whole plan of what has to be accomplished—even every question of practical philosophy that must be answered, and at the same time the order to be followed.

THE TYPIC OF PURE PRACTICAL JUDGMENT

Since moral ideas have no schema, the law of nature serves as the type for judging maxims.

It is the concepts of good and evil that first determine an object for the will. They themselves, however, stand under a practical rule of reason which, if it is pure reason, determines the will *a priori* with respect to its object. Now whether an action possible for us in sensibility is or is not a case that stands under the rule

7 Kant's table mirrors the table of categories in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

requires practical judgment, by which what was said universally in the rule (*in abstracto*) is applied to an action *in concreto*.[8] But a practical rule of pure reason, *first, as practical*, concerns the existence of an object; and *second*, as a *practical rule* of pure reason, it carries with it necessity with respect to the existence of the action, and so is a practical law—and not [68] a natural law through empirical determining grounds, but a law of freedom, according to which the will is to be determinable independently of everything empirical (merely through the representation of a law in general and its form). Yet all cases of possible actions that occur can only be empirical, that is, belonging to experience and nature. So it seems absurd to want to find in the sensible world a case which, although as such it always stands only under the law of nature, nevertheless admits the application of a law of freedom to it, and to which the supersensible idea of the morally good, which is to be exhibited in it *in concreto*, could be applied. Thus the judgment of pure practical reason is subject to the very same difficulties as that of pure theoretical reason. The latter, however, had a means at hand for getting out of them. For in its theoretical use everything depended on intuitions to which pure concepts of the understanding could be applied; and such intuitions (though only of objects of the senses) can be given *a priori*, and hence, as far as the connection of the manifold in them is concerned, in conformity with the pure concepts of the understanding *a priori* (as *schemata*).[9] The morally good, on the other hand, is something supersensible as far as its object is concerned, so that nothing corresponding to it can be found in any sensible intuition. Judgment under laws of pure practical reason therefore seems to be subject to special difficulties. These rest on the fact that a law of freedom is to be applied to actions as events that happen in the sensible world and so, to that extent, belong to nature.

8 *In abstracto* / *in concreto*: Latin, "in the abstract" / "in the concrete," i.e. in a particular instance.

9 *Schemata*: in the Critique of Pure Reason, the rules of the imagination by which pure concepts of the understanding are applied to what is given in time.

But here again a favorable prospect opens for pure practical judgment. When an action possible for me in the sensible world is subsumed under a *pure practical law*, what is at issue is not the possibility of the *action* as an event in the sensible world. That belongs to the judging of the theoretical use of reason according to the law of causality, a pure concept of the understanding for which reason has a *schema* in sensible intuition. Physical causality, or the condition under which it takes place, belongs among the concepts of nature, whose schema the transcendental imagination sketches. Here, however, what is at issue is not the schema of a case according to laws but the schema (if the word is appropriate here) of a law itself. For the *determination of the will* [69] (not the action in relation to its result) through the law alone, without any other determining ground, binds the concept of causality to conditions entirely different from those that make up the connection of nature.

To the law of nature, as the law to which objects of sensible intuition as such are subject, there must correspond a schema—that is, a universal procedure of the imagination (for presenting to the senses *a priori* the pure concept of the understanding that the law determines). But to the law of freedom (as a causality not sensibly conditioned at all), and hence also to the concept of the unconditionally good, no intuition, and hence no schema, can be supplied for the purpose of its application *in concreto*. Consequently the moral law has no cognitive faculty to mediate its application to objects of nature other than the understanding (not the imagination). And what the understanding can supply to an idea of reason, for the purposes of judgment, is not a *schema* of sensibility but a law—yet a law of the kind that can be exhibited *in concreto* in objects of the senses, and hence a law of nature, though only as to its form. This we can therefore call the *type* of the moral law.[10]

10 *Type* (German *Typus*): a model or stand-in; hence Kant's "typic" of practical judgment.

THE RULE OF MORAL JUDGMENT

Ask whether you could will your action as part of a nature governed by that law.

The rule of judgment under laws of pure practical reason is this: ask yourself whether you could regard the action you propose as possible through your will if it were to take place according to a law of nature of which you yourself were a part. By this rule everyone does in fact judge whether actions are morally good or evil. Thus people say: What if *everyone* allowed himself to deceive whenever he believed it to his advantage, or considered himself entitled to cut his life short as soon as he was overcome by utter weariness of it, or regarded the need of others with complete indifference—and you belonged to such an order of things: would you be in it with the assent of your will? Now everyone knows well enough that if he secretly permits himself to deceive, it does not follow that everyone else does so too, or that if he is unkind without being noticed, everyone would at once be unkind to him as well. So this comparison of the maxim of his actions with a universal law of nature is not the determining ground of his will either. But the law of nature is still a *type* for judging his maxims according to moral principles. If the maxim of the action is not so constituted that it stands the test of the form of a [70] law of nature in general, then it is morally impossible. This is how even the most common understanding judges; for the law of nature always underlies all its most ordinary judgments, even its judgments of experience. So the common understanding always has it at hand. Only, in cases where causality through freedom is to be judged, it makes that *law of nature* merely the type of a *law of freedom*. For without something at hand that it could use as an example in a case of experience, it could not give the law of a pure practical reason any use in application.

It is therefore also permissible to use the *nature of the sensible world* as the *type* of an *intelligible nature*, so long as I do not carry

over to the latter intuitions and what depends on them, but refer to it merely the *form of lawfulness* in general. (The concept of lawfulness occurs even in the most common use of reason, but it can be known determinately *a priori* for no other purpose than the pure practical use of reason.) For laws as such are to this extent all the same, wherever they may take their determining grounds from.

Moreover, of everything intelligible, nothing at all is known to us except freedom (by means of the moral law)—and freedom only insofar as it is a presupposition inseparable from that law. Further, all intelligible objects to which reason might perhaps still lead us under the guidance of that law have, again, no reality for us beyond serving the purpose of that same law and of the use of pure practical reason. And this reason is entitled, and also required, to use nature (in its pure form as an object of the understanding) as the type of judgment. For these reasons the present remark serves to prevent what belongs merely to the *typic* of concepts from being counted among the concepts themselves. This typic of judgment, then, guards against the *empiricism* of practical reason, which places the practical concepts of good and evil merely in consequences of experience (in so-called happiness). To be sure, happiness, and the endless useful consequences of a will determined by self-love, could—if such a will at the same time made itself a universal law of nature—certainly serve as an entirely fitting type for the morally good; but it is still not the same thing as the morally good. The very same typic also guards against the *mysticism* of practical reason, which turns what served only as a *symbol* into a *schema*— [71] that is, which supplies real yet non-sensible intuitions (of an invisible kingdom of God) for the application of moral concepts, and so strays off into the extravagant. Only the *rationalism* of judgment is suited to the use of moral concepts. It takes from sensible nature nothing more than what pure reason can also think by itself, that is, lawfulness; and it carries over into supersensible nature nothing but what, conversely, can actually be exhibited through actions in the sensible world according to the

formal rule of a law of nature in general. Guarding against the *empiricism* of practical reason is, however, far more important and advisable. For *mysticism* is still compatible with the purity and sublimity of the moral law; and besides, it is not exactly natural, or suited to the common way of thinking, to strain one's imagination as far as supersensible intuitions, so that on this side the danger is not so widespread. Empiricism, on the other hand, pulls up by the root the morality of dispositions—and it is in dispositions, not merely in actions, that the high worth consists which humanity can and should acquire through morality. It substitutes for duty something entirely different, namely an empirical interest, with which the inclinations in general trade among themselves. Moreover, for that very reason it is bound up with all the inclinations, which (whatever shape they may be given) degrade humanity when they are raised to the dignity of a supreme practical principle. And since the inclinations are nonetheless so congenial to everyone's way of feeling, empiricism is for this reason far more dangerous than any fanaticism, which can never constitute a lasting condition for many people.

The incentives of pure practical reason

Respect for the moral law as the only moral motive.

What is essential to all moral worth of actions is *that the moral law determine the will immediately*. If the determination of the will takes place *in conformity with* the moral law, but only by means of a feeling of whatever kind, one that must be presupposed in order for the law to become a sufficient determining ground of the will, and hence not *for the sake of the law*, then the action will contain *legality* but not *morality*. Now [72] if by an *incentive* (*elater animi*) is meant the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does not already, by virtue of its nature, necessarily conform to the objective law, then it follows, first, that no incentives at all can be ascribed to the divine will. It follows, too, that the incentive of the human will (and of the will of every created rational being) can never be anything other than the moral law, and hence that the objective determining ground must always, and quite alone, be at the same time the subjectively sufficient determining ground of the action—if the action is not merely to fulfill the *letter* of the law without containing its *spirit*[1].[2]

For the sake of the moral law, then, and in order to give it influence on the will, we must not look for any other incentive that would let us do without the incentive of the moral law itself, because that would produce sheer hypocrisy without substance.

1 KANT'S NOTE. Of every lawful action that nevertheless was not done for the sake of the law, one can say that it is morally good merely according to the *letter* but not according to the *spirit* (the disposition).

2 *Elater animi*: Latin, literally "spring of the mind," i.e. a motive force.

It is even *risky* to let any other incentives (such as that of advantage) work *alongside* the moral law. So nothing remains but to determine carefully in what way the moral law becomes an incentive, and what happens to the human faculty of desire, as the effect of that determining ground upon it, when the law is an incentive. For how a law can be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will (which is, after all, what is essential to all morality) is a problem insoluble for human reason, and one with the problem of how a free will is possible. So what we shall have to show *a priori* is not the ground from which the moral law in itself supplies an incentive, but what it effects (or better, must effect) in the mind insofar as it is an incentive.

What is essential in every determination of the will by the moral law is that, as a free will, it be determined solely by the law—hence not merely without the cooperation of sensible impulses, but even with the rejection of all of them, and with the thwarting of all inclinations insofar as they could be contrary to that law. To this extent, then, the effect of the moral law as an incentive is only negative, and as such this incentive can be known *a priori*. For all inclination and every sensible impulse is based on [73] feeling, and the negative effect on feeling (through the thwarting that the inclinations suffer) is itself feeling.

SELF-LOVE AND SELF-CONCEIT

The moral law restricts self-love and strikes down self-conceit, producing a feeling of humiliation.

Consequently we can see *a priori* that the moral law, as determining ground of the will, must, by thwarting all our inclinations, produce a feeling that can be called pain. And here we have the first, and perhaps the only, case in which we have been able to determine from concepts *a priori* the relation of a cognition (here, one of pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. All the inclinations together (which can perhaps also be brought into a tolerable system, and whose satisfaction is then called one's own happiness) make up *selfishness* (*sol-*

ipsismus). This is either the selfishness of *self-love*, a *benevolence* toward oneself that exceeds everything else (*philautia*), or that of *satisfaction* with oneself (*arrogantia*). The former is specifically called *self-love*; the latter, *self-conceit*.[3] Pure practical reason merely *thwarts* self-love, since it restricts it—as natural and active in us even before the moral law—to the condition of agreement with this law; it is then called *rational self-love*. But self-conceit it *strikes down* altogether. For all claims to self-esteem that precede agreement with the moral law are null and entirely unwarranted, since precisely the certainty of a disposition that agrees with this law is the first condition of all worth of the person (as we shall soon make clearer), and every presumption prior to it is false and contrary to law. Now the propensity to self-esteem is itself one of the inclinations that the moral law thwarts, insofar as that self-esteem rests merely on sensibility.

RESPECT FOR THE MORAL LAW

Respect is a feeling produced by reason and is the only one known completely a priori.

So the moral law strikes down self-conceit. But since this law is nevertheless something positive in itself—namely the form of an intellectual causality, that is, of freedom—it is at the same time an object of *respect*, insofar as it *weakens* self-conceit in opposition to its subjective counterpart, namely the inclinations in us. And insofar as it even *strikes down* self-conceit, that is, humbles it, it is an object of the greatest *respect*, and hence also the ground of a positive feeling that is not of empirical origin and is known *a priori*. Respect for the moral law is therefore a feeling produced by an intellectual ground; and this feeling is the only one that we know completely *a priori* and whose necessity we can see.

74 We saw in the previous chapter that everything that presents itself as an object of the will *before* the moral law is

excluded from the determining grounds of the will, under the name of the unconditionally good, by this law itself as the supreme condition of practical reason. We saw, too, that the mere practical form, which consists in the fitness of maxims for universal lawgiving, first determines what is good in itself and absolutely, and grounds the maxim of a pure will, which alone is good in every respect. But we find our nature as sensible beings so constituted that the matter of the faculty of desire (objects of inclination, whether of hope or of fear) forces itself on us first. And our pathologically determinable self, although its maxims make it wholly unfit for universal lawgiving, nevertheless strives, just as if it made up our entire self, to assert its claims first, as the primary and original ones. This propensity to make oneself, according to the subjective determining grounds of one's choice, into the objective determining ground of the will in general can be called *self-love*; and when self-love makes itself lawgiving and an unconditional practical principle, it can be called *self-conceit*.[4] Now the moral law, which alone is truly (that is, in every respect) objective, entirely excludes the influence of self-love on the supreme practical principle, and infinitely thwarts self-conceit, which prescribes the subjective conditions of self-love as laws. But whatever thwarts our self-conceit in our own judgment humbles us. So the moral law inevitably humbles every human being when he compares the sensible propensity of his nature with the law. Something whose representation, *as determining ground of our will*, humbles us in our self-consciousness awakens *respect* for itself insofar as it is positive and a determining ground. So the moral law is subjectively, too, a ground of respect. Now everything found in self-love belongs to inclination, and all inclination rests on feelings; so whatever thwarts all the inclinations together in self-love necessarily, by that very fact, has an influence on feeling. We therefore under-

3 *Solipsismus, philautia, arrogantia*: Latinized terms for "selfishness," "self-love" and "arrogance"; *philautia* (Kant also writes *Philautie*) is from the Greek for love of oneself. Both *Selbstliebe* and *Eigenliebe* are rendered "self-love."

4 *Pathologically*: in Kant's usage, "as affected by feeling or sensibility," with no implication of disease.

stand how it is possible to see *a priori* that the moral law, by excluding the inclinations, and the propensity to make them the supreme practical condition, that is, self-love, from any share in the supreme lawgiving, can exert an effect on feeling. [75] This effect is on the one hand merely *negative*; on the other, namely with respect to the restricting ground of pure practical reason, it is *positive*. And no special kind of feeling, under the name of a practical or moral feeling, may be assumed for it as preceding the moral law and underlying it.

The negative effect on feeling (of disagreeableness) is *pathological*, like every influence on feeling and like every feeling in general. But as an effect of consciousness of the moral law, and hence in relation to an intelligible cause—namely the subject of pure practical reason as supreme lawgiver—this feeling of a rational subject affected by inclinations is indeed called humiliation (intellectual contempt). In relation to its positive ground, however, the law, it is at the same time respect for the law. For this law there is no feeling at all; but in the judgment of reason, since the law clears resistance out of the way, the removal of a hindrance is esteemed equal to a positive furtherance of causality. That is why this feeling can now also be called a feeling of respect for the moral law, and, on both grounds together, a *moral feeling*.

The moral law, then, is the formal determining ground of the action, through practical pure reason; it is also the material, but only objective, determining ground of the objects of action, under the name of good and evil; and just so it is also the subjective determining ground—that is, the incentive—to this action, since it has an influence on the sensibility of the subject and produces a feeling that promotes the law's influence on the will. Here no feeling attuned to morality *precedes in the subject*. That is impossible, since all feeling is sensible, whereas the incentive of the moral disposition must be free of every sensible condition. Rather, the sensible feeling that underlies all our inclinations is indeed the condition of the sensation we call respect, but the cause that determines this feeling lies in pure

practical reason. Because of its origin, therefore, this sensation cannot be called pathologically produced; it must be called *practically produced*. For the representation of the moral law takes away the influence of self-love and the delusion of self-conceit, and thereby the hindrance to pure practical reason is lessened. In the judgment of reason, the representation of the superiority [76] of its objective law over the impulses of sensibility is produced—and hence the weight of that law is produced relatively (with respect to a will affected by sensibility) through the removal of the counterweight. And so respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; it is morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive. For pure practical reason, by rejecting all the claims of self-love in opposition to it, gives authority to the law, which alone now has influence. It should be noted here that, since respect is an effect on feeling, and hence on the sensibility of a rational being, it presupposes this sensibility, and so also the finitude of such beings as the moral law imposes respect upon. Respect for the *law* cannot be ascribed to a supreme being, or even to any being free of all sensibility, for whom sensibility therefore cannot be a hindrance to practical reason.

This feeling (under the name of moral feeling) is therefore produced solely by reason. It does not serve for judging actions, still less for grounding the objective moral law itself, but merely as an incentive to make this law in itself one's maxim. But what name could more fittingly be given to this peculiar feeling, which cannot be compared with any pathological one? It is of so distinctive a kind that it seems to be at the command of reason alone—and indeed of practical pure reason.

RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Respect goes only to persons, and in them really to the law their example displays.

Respect always applies only to persons, never to things. Things can arouse *inclination* in us, and, if they are animals (horses, dogs, and so on), even *love*; or else *fear*, like the sea, a volcano, a

beast of prey—but never *respect*. Something that comes closer to this feeling is *admiration*, and this, as an affect—astonishment—can apply to things as well: sky-high mountains, for instance, the size, number, and distance of the heavenly bodies, the strength and speed of many animals, and so on. But none of this is respect. A human being, too, can be an object of love, fear, or admiration for me, even to the point of astonishment, and yet not for that reason be an object of respect. His playful humor, his courage and strength, the power he has through his rank among others, can instill such feelings in me, but inner respect for him is still lacking. *Fontenelle* says: *I bow before a great lord,* *but my spirit* [77] *does not bow*. I can add: before a humble, ordinary citizen in whom I perceive an uprightness of character in a degree that I am not conscious of in myself, *my spirit bows*, whether I will it or not, and however high I carry my head so as not to let him overlook my superior standing. Why is this?[5] His example holds before me a law that strikes down my self-conceit when I compare it with my conduct, and I see compliance with that law—and hence its *practicability*—proved before my eyes by deed. Now I may even be conscious of the same degree of uprightness in myself, and still the respect remains. For since in human beings all good is always defective, the law, made intuitive by an example, still always strikes down my pride. The man I see before me provides the standard for this: I do not know his impurity, which may still cling to him, as I know my own, and so he appears to me in a purer light. *Respect* is a *tribute* that we cannot refuse to merit, whether we will it or not. We may at most hold it back outwardly, but we cannot help feeling it inwardly.

Respect is so *little* a feeling of *pleasure* that we yield to it only reluctantly where a human being is concerned. We try to find something that could lighten its burden for us, some fault or other, to compensate ourselves for the humiliation that such an example inflicts on us. Even the dead are not always safe from

5 Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), French writer and popularizer of science; the saying paraphrases a line in his writings.

this criticism, especially when their example seems inimitable. Even the moral law itself, in its *solemn majesty*, is exposed to this effort to fend off respect for it. Do we suppose there is any other reason why we would like to bring the moral law down to the level of our familiar inclination, and why we take such pains to make it the favored precept of our own well-understood advantage, than to be rid of the forbidding respect that holds our own unworthiness so sternly before us? Yet there is in turn so *little displeasure* in it that once we have laid aside self-conceit and allowed that respect practical influence, we can never see enough of the splendor of this law; and the soul believes itself elevated in the same measure as it sees the holy law elevated above itself and its frail nature. Great talents, it is true, and [78] activity proportionate to them can also produce respect, or a feeling analogous to it; and it is quite proper to accord it to them. Here it seems as if admiration were the same as that feeling. But if one looks more closely, one will notice the following. Since it always remains uncertain how much of a person's skill is due to innate talent and how much to cultivation through his own diligence, reason presents the skill to us as presumably the fruit of cultivation, and hence as merit. This noticeably lowers our self-conceit, and either reproaches us for it or imposes on us the task of following such an example in the way that suits us. So this respect that we show to such a person (properly speaking, to the law that his example holds before us) is not mere admiration. This is confirmed also by the fact that when the common crowd of amateurs believes it has learned from somewhere of the bad character of such a man (Voltaire, say), it gives up all respect for him, whereas the true scholar still feels it, at least with regard to his talents. For the scholar is himself engaged in a work and a vocation that in a certain way make it a law for him to imitate that man.[6]

Respect for the moral law is therefore the sole and at the same time undoubted moral incentive, and this feeling is direc-

6 Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet, 1694–1778), French writer and philosopher, famed for his wit and notorious for his quarrels and personal conduct.

ted at no object except on this ground alone. First, the moral law determines the will objectively and immediately in the judgment of reason. But freedom, whose causality is determinable only through the law, consists precisely in restricting all inclinations, and hence the esteem of the person himself, to the condition of compliance with its pure law. This restriction now has an effect on feeling and produces a sensation of displeasure that can be known *a priori* from the moral law. But to this extent it is merely a *negative* effect. Arising from the influence of a pure practical reason, it chiefly thwarts the activity of the subject insofar as inclinations are its determining grounds, and hence thwarts his opinion of his personal worth (which, without agreement with the moral law, is reduced to nothing). So the effect of this law on feeling is merely humiliation. This we can indeed see *a priori*, but in it we can recognize not the force of the pure practical law as an incentive, only resistance to the incentives of sensibility. [79] But the same law is nevertheless objectively, that is, in the representation of pure reason, an immediate determining ground of the will, and consequently this humiliation takes place only relative to the purity of the law. Therefore the lowering of the claims of moral self-esteem—that is, humiliation on the sensible side—is an elevation of the moral, that is, the practical, esteem for the law itself on the intellectual side. In a word, it is respect for the law, and so also a feeling that is positive as to its intellectual cause and is known *a priori*. For every lessening of the hindrances to an activity is a furtherance of that activity itself. The acknowledgment of the moral law, however, is the consciousness of an activity of practical reason on objective grounds, which fails to show its effect in actions only because subjective (pathological) causes hinder it. So respect for the moral law must also be regarded as a positive but indirect effect of the law on feeling, insofar as the law weakens the hindering influence of the inclinations by humbling self-conceit; and hence as a subjective ground of activity—that is, as the *incentive* to comply with the law—and as the ground of maxims for a way of life in conformity with it. From the concept of an incentive

arises that of an *interest*, which is never ascribed to any being except one that has reason, and which signifies an *incentive* of the will insofar as it is *represented by reason*. Since in a morally good will the law itself must be the incentive, the *moral interest* is a pure, sense-free interest of practical reason alone. On the concept of an interest is also based that of a *maxim*. A maxim, then, is morally genuine only when it rests on the mere interest one takes in complying with the law. But all three concepts—that of an *incentive*, of an *interest*, and of a *maxim*—can be applied only to finite beings. For they all presuppose a limitation in the nature of a being: that the subjective constitution of its choice does not of itself agree with the objective law of a practical reason—a need to be driven to activity by something, because an inner hindrance stands in its way. So they cannot be applied to the divine will.

There is something so singular in the boundless esteem for the pure moral law, stripped of all advantage, as practical [80] reason presents it to us for compliance—reason whose voice makes even the boldest wrongdoer tremble and forces him to hide from its sight—that we need not wonder at finding this influence of a merely intellectual idea on feeling unfathomable for speculative reason. We must be content that we can still see this much *a priori*: such a feeling is inseparably bound up with the representation of the moral law in every finite rational being. If this feeling of respect were pathological, and hence a feeling of pleasure grounded in inner *sense*, it would be futile to try to discover a connection between it and any idea *a priori*. But in fact it is a feeling that concerns only the practical. It attaches to the representation of a law merely as to its form, not on account of any object of the law; so it can be counted neither as gratification nor as pain, and yet it produces an *interest* in complying with the law, which we call the *moral* interest. And indeed the capacity to take such an interest in the law (or respect for the moral law itself) is, properly speaking, *moral feeling*.

The consciousness of a *free* submission of the will to the law, yet as bound up with an unavoidable constraint put upon all

inclinations, though only by one's own reason, is, then, respect for the law. The law that demands and also inspires this respect is, as one sees, none other than the moral law (for no other excludes all inclinations from the immediacy of their influence on the will). The action that is objectively practical according to this law, with the exclusion of all determining grounds from inclination, is called *duty*. Because of this exclusion, duty contains in its concept practical *necessitation*, that is, determination to actions, however *reluctantly* they may be done. The feeling that arises from the consciousness of this necessitation is not pathological, as a feeling produced by an object of the senses would be, but practical only, that is, possible through a preceding (objective) determination of the will and causality of reason. As *submission* to a law, that is, as a command (which announces constraint to the sensibly affected subject), it therefore contains no pleasure but rather, to that extent, displeasure at the action. On the other hand, since this constraint is exercised solely through the lawgiving of one's *own* reason, the feeling also contains *elevation*; and the [81] subjective effect on feeling, insofar as pure practical reason is its sole cause, can therefore be called simply *self-approbation* with respect to that reason. For one recognizes oneself as determined to it solely by the law, without any interest, and now becomes conscious of an entirely different interest, produced subjectively by the law, which is purely practical and *free*. To take this interest in an action conforming to duty is not something any inclination recommends; rather, reason commands it absolutely through the practical law and also actually produces it. That is why it bears an entirely distinctive name, namely that of respect.

FROM DUTY, NOT MERELY IN CONFORMITY WITH IT

Moral worth lies in acting from respect for the law, not from inclination or love.

The concept of duty therefore requires of the action, *objectively*, agreement with the law, but of its maxim, subjectively, respect

for the law, as the sole way in which the will is determined by the law. And on this rests the difference between the consciousness of having acted *in conformity with duty* and that of having acted *from duty*, that is, from respect for the law. The first (legality) is possible even if inclinations alone had been the determining grounds of the will; but the second (*morality*), moral worth, must be placed solely in this: that the action is done from duty, that is, merely for the sake of the law.[7]

It is of the greatest importance in all moral judgments to attend with the utmost precision to the subjective principle of all maxims, so that all the morality of actions is placed in their necessity *from duty* and from respect for the law, not from love and affection for what the actions are meant to bring about. For human beings and all created rational beings, moral necessity is necessitation, that is, obligation; and every action grounded on it is to be represented as duty, not as a way of proceeding that already pleases us of itself or could come to please us. As if we could ever reach the point where, without respect [82] for the law—which is bound up with fear, or at least apprehension, of transgressing it—we, like the Deity exalted above all dependence, could come of ourselves into possession of a *holiness* of will, through an agreement of the will with the pure moral law that had, as it were, become our nature and could never be disturbed (in which case the law, since we could never be tempted to be untrue to it, might in the end even cease altogether to be a command for us).

For the moral law is, for the will of an all-perfect being, a law of *holiness*; but for the will of every finite rational being it is a law of *duty*, of moral necessitation, and of the determination of its actions through *respect* for this law and from reverence for its

7 KANT'S NOTE. If one carefully considers the concept of respect for persons, as it was set out earlier, one becomes aware that it always rests on the consciousness of a duty that an example holds up before us, and that respect can therefore never have any ground but a moral one. One also sees that it is very good—indeed, even from a psychological point of view, very useful for knowledge of human beings—to pay attention, wherever we use this expression, to the secret and remarkable, yet frequent, regard that human beings have for the moral law in their judgments.

duty. No other subjective principle may be assumed as incentive. For otherwise the action may indeed turn out as the law prescribes; but since it conforms to duty yet is not done from duty, the disposition behind it is not moral—and in this lawgiving it is the disposition that really matters.

It is very fine to do good to people from love of them and from sympathetic benevolence, or to be just from love of order. But this is not yet the genuine moral maxim of our conduct, the one befitting our standpoint among rational beings *as human beings*, if we presume, like volunteers as it were, to set ourselves with proud conceit above the thought of duty and, as though independent of command, to want to do merely from our own pleasure what for us would need no command. We stand under a *discipline* of reason, and in all our maxims we must not forget our subjection to it. We must not withdraw anything from it, nor, through self-loving delusion, detract anything from the authority of the law (even though it is our own reason that gives it) by placing the determining ground of our will—even if it conforms to the law—anywhere other than in the law itself and in respect for this law. Duty and what we owe are the only names we may give to our relation to the moral law. We are indeed lawgiving members of a kingdom of morals, possible through freedom and presented to us by practical reason as an object of respect; yet we are at the same time its subjects, not its sovereign. To mistake our lower rank as creatures, and for self-conceit to rebel against the authority of the [83] holy law, is already to defect from that law in spirit, even if its letter were fulfilled.

THE COMMAND TO LOVE

The Gospel command of love requires practical love, an ideal of holiness we can only strive toward.

But the possibility of such a command as *Love God above all, and your neighbor as yourself*[8] agrees very well with this. For as a command it does require respect for a law that *commands love*, and does not leave it to our discretionary choice to make love our principle. But love of God as inclination (pathological love) is impossible, for he is not an object of the senses. Such love toward human beings is possible, to be sure, but cannot be commanded; for it is in no one's power to love someone merely on command. So it is merely *practical love* that is meant in that kernel of all laws. To love God means, in this sense, to *do gladly* what he commands; to love one's neighbor means to practice all duty toward him *gladly*.[9] But the command that makes this a rule cannot command us to *have* this disposition in actions conforming to duty, but only to *strive* for it. For a command that one should do something gladly is self-contradictory. If we already knew of ourselves what is incumbent on us to do, and were moreover conscious of doing it gladly, a command about it would be entirely unnecessary. And if we do it, but not gladly, only from respect for the law, then a command that makes precisely this respect the incentive of the maxim would work directly against the disposition it commands. That law of all laws therefore, like every moral precept of the Gospel, presents the moral disposition in its entire perfection. As an ideal of holiness it is attainable by no creature, and yet it is the archetype that we should strive to approach and to resemble in an uninterrupted but endless progress. For if a rational creature could ever reach the point of fulfilling all moral laws entirely *gladly*, this would

8 KANT'S NOTE. The principle of one's own happiness, which some would make the supreme principle of morality, forms a strange contrast with this law. It would run: *Love yourself above all, but God and your neighbor for your own sake*.

9 The double commandment of love, from the Gospels (Matthew 22:37–39; Mark 12:30–31).

mean that there was in it not even the possibility of a desire tempting it to deviate from them. For overcoming such a desire always costs the subject sacrifice and so requires self-constraint, that is, inner necessitation to do what one does [84] not altogether like doing. But a creature can never reach this level of moral disposition. For since it is a creature, and therefore always dependent with respect to what it requires for complete contentment with its condition, it can never be entirely free of desires and inclinations. Because these rest on physical causes, they do not of themselves harmonize with the moral law, which has quite different sources. With regard to them, therefore, they always make it necessary for the creature to ground the disposition of its maxims on moral necessitation: not on ready devotion but on respect, which *demands* compliance with the law even if that compliance were reluctant; not on love, which fears no inner reluctance of the will toward the law. And yet it is necessary for the creature to make this latter—mere love for the law—the constant, though unattainable, goal of its striving. (For then the law would cease to be a *command*, and morality, having passed over subjectively into holiness, would cease to be *virtue*.) For in the case of something we hold in high esteem yet (conscious of our weaknesses) shrink from, the greater ease of satisfying it turns reverential shrinking into affection and respect into love. At least this would be the consummation of a disposition devoted to the law, if it were ever possible for a creature to attain it.

AGAINST MORAL FANATICISM

Presenting duty as noble merit breeds moral fanaticism; the human moral condition is virtue in conflict.

The aim of this reflection here is not so much to bring the Gospel command just cited to distinct concepts, in order to check *religious fanaticism* with regard to the love of God, as to determine the moral disposition precisely, directly with regard to duties toward human beings as well, and to check, or if possible prevent, a *merely moral* fanaticism that infects many minds. The

moral level on which the human being stands (and, as far as we can see, every rational creature too) is respect for the moral law. The disposition incumbent on him in obeying it is to obey it from duty—not from spontaneous affection, nor even from some unbidden endeavor gladly undertaken of his own accord; and the moral condition in which he can always be is *virtue*, that is, moral disposition *in conflict*, and not *holiness* in the supposed *possession* of a complete *purity* of the will's dispositions. Minds are attuned to sheer moral fanaticism, and to a heightening of self-conceit, when they are encouraged to perform actions as noble, sublime and magnanimous [85] . This puts them under the delusion that it was not duty—that is, respect for the law, whose yoke (a gentle one nonetheless, since reason itself lays it on us) they *must* bear, however reluctantly—that constituted the determining ground of their actions, and which still humbles them as they follow it (*obey* it); but as if those actions were expected of them not from duty but as sheer merit. For in imitating such deeds from such a principle, not only would they not have done the least justice to the spirit of the law, which consists in a disposition that submits to the law, not in the lawfulness of the action (whatever its principle may be); and not only do they place the incentive *pathologically* (in sympathy, or else in self-love), not morally (in the law). In this way they also produce a windy, high-flying, fantastic cast of mind: they flatter themselves on a spontaneous goodness of heart that needs neither spur nor rein, and for which no command is even necessary; and over this they forget what they owe, which they ought to think of before merit. The actions of others that were done with great sacrifice, and merely for the sake of duty, may well be praised under the name of *noble* and *sublime* deeds—but even then only insofar as there are traces suggesting that they were done wholly from respect for duty and not from surges of feeling. But if one wants to hold them up to someone as examples to follow, respect for duty (as the only genuine moral feeling) must without fail be used as the incentive: this earnest, holy precept, which does not leave it to our vain self-love to trifle with patho-

logical impulses (insofar as they are analogous to morality) and to pride ourselves on *meritorious* worth. If we only search carefully, we shall find for all actions worthy of praise a law of duty already there, which *commands* and does not leave it to our liking what might please our propensity. This is the only way of presenting them that forms the soul morally, because it alone is capable of firm and precisely determined principles.

If *fanaticism* in the most general sense is an overstepping of the bounds of human reason undertaken according to principles, then *moral fanaticism* is this overstepping of the bounds that pure practical reason sets to humanity. By these bounds [86] it forbids us to place the subjective determining ground of actions conforming to duty—that is, their moral incentive—anywhere but in the law itself, and to place the disposition thereby brought into our maxims anywhere but in respect for this law. It thus commands us to make the thought of duty, which strikes down all *arrogance* as well as vain *self-love*, the supreme *life-principle* of all morality in human beings.

If this is so, then not only novelists and sentimental educators (however much they may rail against sentimentality), but sometimes even philosophers—indeed the strictest of them all, the Stoics—have introduced *moral fanaticism* in place of a sober but wise discipline of morals, although the fanaticism of the Stoics was more heroic, that of the others insipid and mawkish. And one can say of the moral teaching of the Gospel, without hypocrisy and in all truth, that it was the first, through the purity of its moral principle and at the same time through that principle's suitability to the limitations of finite beings, to subject all good conduct of human beings to the discipline of a duty set before their eyes, which does not let them rove fanatically among dreamed-up moral perfections; and that it set, to self-conceit as well as to self-love—both of which readily mistake their bounds—the limits of humility (that[10] is, of self-knowledge).

10 The Stoics: the Greek and Roman school (founded by Zeno of Citium, c. 300 BC) that held virtue to be the sole good and the sage to be self-sufficient.

DUTY, SUBLIME AND MIGHTY NAME

Duty's origin is personality: our freedom under laws given by our own reason.

Duty! You sublime and mighty name, that embrace nothing charming or ingratiating, but demand submission; that yet threaten nothing to move the will that would arouse natural aversion in the mind and frighten it, but merely set up a law that of itself finds entry into the mind and yet, even against our will, wins veneration for itself (if not always compliance)—a law before which all inclinations fall silent, even though they secretly work against it: what origin is worthy of you, and where is the root of your noble descent to be found, which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations—that root from which to be descended is the indispensable condition of the only worth that human beings can give themselves?

It can be nothing less than what elevates the human being above himself (as a part of the world of sense), what links him to an order of things that only the understanding can think, and which at the same time has under it the whole world of sense, and with it the empirically determinable existence of the human being [87] in time and the whole of all ends (which alone is suited to such unconditional practical laws as the moral law). It is nothing other than *personality*, that is, freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature, yet regarded at the same time as a capacity of a being subject to laws of its own—namely, pure practical laws given by its own reason. The person, then, as belonging to the world of sense, is subject to its own personality insofar as it belongs at the same time to the intelligible world. It is no wonder, then, that the human being, as belonging to both worlds, must regard his own being, in relation to his second and highest vocation, only with veneration, and the laws of this vocation with the highest respect.

On this origin are grounded a number of expressions that designate the worth of objects according to moral ideas. The

moral law is *holy* (inviolable). The human being is indeed unholy enough, but the *humanity* in his person must be holy to him. In the whole of creation, everything one wants and over which one has any power can also be used *merely as a means*; only the human being, and with him every rational creature, is an *end in itself*. For he is the subject of the moral law, which is holy by virtue of the autonomy of his freedom. Precisely because of this, every will—even each person's own will, directed at himself—is restricted to the condition of agreement with the *autonomy* of the rational being: namely, not to subject that being to any purpose that is not possible according to a law that could arise from the will of the subject on whom the action is performed; hence never to use that subject merely as a means but at the same time as an end. We rightly attribute this condition even to the divine will, with respect to the rational beings in the world as its creatures, since it rests on their *personality*, through which alone they are ends in themselves.

This idea of personality, which awakens respect, sets before our eyes the sublimity of our nature (as regards its vocation), while at the same time letting us notice how far our conduct falls short of it, and thereby striking down self-conceit. It is natural and easily noticed even by the most common human reason. Has not every even moderately honest man sometimes found that he refrained from an otherwise harmless lie—one by which he could have got [88] himself out of a vexing affair, or even have benefited a beloved and deserving friend—solely so as not to have to despise himself secretly in his own eyes? In the greatest misfortune of his life, which he could have avoided if only he had been able to set duty aside, is not an upright man still held upright by the consciousness that he has preserved and honored the humanity in his person in its dignity, that he has no cause to be ashamed before himself or to shrink from the inner gaze of self-examination? This consolation is not happiness, not even the smallest part of it. For no one will wish for the occasion of it, perhaps not even for a life in such circumstances. But he lives, and cannot bear to be unworthy of life in his own

eyes. This inner reassurance is therefore merely negative with respect to everything that may make life pleasant: it is the warding off of the danger of sinking in personal worth, after he has already entirely given up the worth of his condition. It is the effect of a respect for something quite other than life—something in comparison and contrast with which life, with all its pleasantness, has no worth at all. He lives on only from duty, not because he finds the least relish in living.

Such is the nature of the genuine incentive of pure practical reason. It is none other than the pure moral law itself, insofar as it lets us feel the sublimity of our own supersensible existence and, subjectively, produces respect for their higher vocation in human beings, who are at the same time conscious of their sensible existence and of the dependence, bound up with it, on their nature, which is to that extent very much pathologically affected. Now so many charms and pleasures of life can very well be combined with this incentive that, for their sake alone, the shrewdest choice of a reasonable *Epicurean*, reflecting on the greatest well-being of life, would declare itself for moral good conduct. It can also be advisable to combine this prospect of a cheerful enjoyment of life with that supreme motive, which is already sufficient by itself to determine the will. But this should be done only to counterbalance the enticements that vice never fails to dangle on the other side—not to place in these prospects the real moving force, not even the smallest part of it, when duty is in question. For that would amount to wanting to contaminate the moral disposition [89] at its source. The venerableness of duty has nothing to do with the enjoyment of life; it has its own distinctive law, and its own distinctive court as well. However much one might shake the two together, to hand them, mixed, as a medicine to the sick soul, they soon separate of their own accord; and if they do not, the former has no effect at all. And even if physical life gained some strength by it, moral life would waste away past saving.

CRITICAL ELUCIDATION OF THE ANALYTIC

Kant explains why the Analytic runs from principles to concepts to feeling, reversing the first Critique.

By the critical elucidation of a science, or of a part of one that forms a system on its own, I understand the investigation and justification of why it must have precisely this systematic form and no other, when it is compared with another system that has a similar cognitive faculty as its basis. Now practical reason has the same cognitive faculty as its basis as speculative reason, insofar as both are *pure reason*. So the difference in systematic form between the one and the other will have to be determined by comparing the two, and the ground of that difference given.

The Analytic of pure theoretical reason had to do with the cognition of objects that may be given to the understanding. It therefore had to begin from *intuition*, and so (since intuition is always sensible) from sensibility; only from there could it advance to concepts (of the objects of this intuition), and only after both had been set out could it end with *principles*. Practical reason, by contrast, has to do not with objects in order to *cognize* them, but with its own capacity to *make them actual* (in accordance with its cognition of them), that is, with a will, which is a causality insofar as reason contains its determining ground. Consequently it has no object of intuition to supply, but, as practical reason, *only a law* of that causality (because the concept of causality always contains reference to a law that determines the existence of a manifold in relation to one another). Hence a critique of its Analytic, insofar as it is to be a practical reason (which is the real task), must begin from the *possibility of practical* [90] *principles a priori*. Only from there could it proceed to *concepts* of the objects of a practical reason, namely those of the absolutely good and evil, so as first to give them in accordance with those principles (for prior to these principles it is not possible for any cognitive faculty whatever to give them as good and evil). And only then could the last chapter—on the relation

of pure practical reason to sensibility and its necessary influence on sensibility, to be cognized *a priori*, that is, on *moral feeling*—conclude this part. Thus the Analytic of pure practical reason divided the whole range of the conditions of its use quite analogously to the theoretical Analytic, but in reverse order. The Analytic of theoretical pure reason was divided into transcendental Aesthetic and transcendental Logic; that of practical reason, conversely, into Logic and Aesthetic of pure practical reason (if I may be permitted to use these designations, otherwise quite inappropriate here, merely for the sake of the analogy). There, the Logic was in turn divided into the Analytic of concepts and that of principles; here, into that of principles and that of concepts. There, the Aesthetic also had two parts, because of the twofold kind of sensible intuition; here, sensibility is considered not as a capacity for intuition at all, but merely as feeling (which can be a subjective ground of desire), and with respect to feeling pure practical reason permits no further division.[11]

It is also quite easy to see why this division into two parts, with its subdivisions, was not actually carried out here (as one might well have been tempted to attempt at the outset, following the example of the former). For since it is *pure reason* that is considered here in its practical use, and hence as proceeding from principles *a priori* and not from empirical determining grounds, the division of the Analytic of pure practical reason will have to turn out like that of a syllogism. It proceeds from the universal in the *major premise* (the moral principle), through a subsumption, made in the *minor premise*, of possible actions (as good or evil) under that universal, to the *conclusion*, namely the subjective determination of the will (an interest in the practically possible good and the maxim grounded on it). For anyone who has been able to [91] convince himself of the propositions put forward in the Analytic, such comparisons will be a pleasure. For they rightly prompt the expectation that we may perhaps one day

11 The twofold kind of sensible intuition: space and time, treated separately in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the Critique of Pure Reason.

attain insight into the unity of the entire faculty of pure reason (theoretical as well as practical) and be able to derive everything from one principle. This is the unavoidable need of human reason, which finds complete satisfaction only in a complete systematic unity of its cognitions.

But if we now also consider the content of the cognition that we can have of a pure practical reason, and through it, as its Analytic sets this out, we find, along with a remarkable analogy between it and theoretical reason, no less remarkable differences. With respect to theoretical reason, the *capacity for pure rational cognition a priori* could be proved quite easily and evidently through examples from the sciences. (In these, since they put their principles to the test in so many ways through methodical use, one need not fear a secret admixture of empirical grounds of cognition as readily as in common cognition.) But that pure reason, without the admixture of any empirical determining ground, is also practical of itself alone—this one had to be able to show from the *most common practical use of reason*, by certifying the supreme practical principle as one that every natural human reason recognizes, completely *a priori* and independent of any sensible data, as the supreme law of its will. One had first to confirm and justify this principle, as to the purity of its origin, even *in the judgment of this common reason*, before science could take it in hand to make use of it—as a fact, so to speak, that precedes all reasoning about its possibility and all the consequences that might be drawn from it. But this circumstance too can be well explained from what was said just before: because pure practical reason must necessarily begin from principles, which must therefore be laid at the basis of all science as its first data and cannot first arise from it. This justification of moral principles as principles of a pure reason could, moreover, be carried out quite well and with sufficient certainty by a mere appeal to the judgment of common human understanding. For everything empirical that might slip into our [92] maxims as a determining ground of the will makes itself *immediately recognizable* through the feeling of gratification or pain that

necessarily attaches to it insofar as it arouses desire; and pure practical reason directly *resists* taking this feeling up into its principle as a condition. The heterogeneity of the determining grounds (the empirical and the rational) is made recognizable by this resistance of a practically lawgiving reason to every meddling inclination—through a distinctive kind of *sensation*, which, however, does not precede the lawgiving of practical reason but is rather produced by it alone, and indeed as a constraint: namely, through the feeling of a respect such as no human being has for inclinations, of whatever kind they may be, but does have for the law. It is made so recognizable, and so salient and striking, that no one, not even the most common human understanding, could fail to realize at once, when an example is put before him, that empirical grounds of volition may indeed advise him to follow their attractions, but that he can never be expected to *obey* anything but the pure practical law of reason alone.

HAPPINESS AND MORALITY DISTINGUISHED

Separating the doctrine of happiness from the doctrine of morals is the Analytic's first task.

The distinction between the *doctrine of happiness* and the *doctrine of morals*—in the first of which empirical principles make up the whole foundation, while in the second they make up not even the smallest addition—is, then, the first and most important task incumbent on the Analytic of pure practical reason. In it the Analytic must proceed as *scrupulously*—indeed, one might even say, as *painfully*—as any geometer ever did in his work. The philosopher here has greater difficulty to contend with (as always in rational cognition through mere concepts, without constructing them), because he can lay no intuition at the basis (for a pure noumenon). Yet he also has this advantage: that, almost like the chemist, he can at any time perform an experiment with every human being's practical reason, in order to distinguish the moral (pure) determining ground from the empir-

ical one. He does this by adding the moral law (as determining ground) to the empirically affected will (for example, that of someone who would like to lie because he can gain something by it). It is as if the analytical chemist added alkali to a solution of calcareous earth in spirit of salt: the spirit of salt at once leaves the lime and unites with the alkali, and the lime is precipitated to the bottom.[12] In the same way, hold up to a man who is otherwise honest (or who this once only puts himself in thought in an honest man's place) the moral [93] law, by which he recognizes the worthlessness of a liar. At once his practical reason (in judging what he ought to do) abandons the advantage and unites with what preserves his respect for his own person (truthfulness). The advantage, once separated and washed clean of every appendage of reason (which is wholly on the side of duty), is now weighed by everyone. It may well still enter into combination with reason in other cases—only not where it could be contrary to the moral law, which reason never abandons but unites with most intimately.

But this *distinction* between the principle of happiness and that of morality is not on that account at once an *opposition* between them. Pure practical reason does not want us to *give up* our claims to happiness, but only to take *no account* of them whatever as soon as duty is in question. It can even, in a certain respect, be a duty to attend to one's happiness: partly because happiness (to which skill, health and wealth belong) contains means for fulfilling one's duty, partly because the lack of it (poverty, for example) contains temptations to transgress one's duty. Only, to promote one's happiness can never directly be a duty, still less a principle of all duty. Now since all determining grounds of the will except the one pure practical law of reason (the moral law) are without exception empirical, and as such belong to the principle of happiness, they must all be kept apart from the supreme moral principle and never incorporated into

12 Spirit of salt: hydrochloric acid; calcareous earth: lime (calcium carbonate). Kant describes a standard precipitation experiment of eighteenth-century chemistry.

it as a condition. For this would cancel all moral worth just as surely as an empirical admixture in geometrical principles would cancel all mathematical evidence—which is (in Plato's judgment) the most excellent thing mathematics has in itself, surpassing even all its usefulness.[13]

In place of a deduction of the supreme principle of pure practical reason—that is, an explanation of the possibility of such a cognition *a priori*—nothing more could be offered than this: that if one had insight into the possibility of the freedom of an efficient cause, one would also have insight not merely into the possibility but even into the necessity of the moral law as the supreme practical law of rational beings to whom one attributes freedom of the causality of their will. For the two concepts are so inseparably bound together that one could even define practical [94] freedom as the will's independence of everything except the moral law alone. But the freedom of an efficient cause, especially in the world of sense, can in no way be understood as to its possibility. We may count ourselves fortunate if only we can be sufficiently assured that there is no proof of its impossibility, and are now compelled by the moral law, which postulates it, to assume it—and by that very fact are also entitled to do so. There are, however, still many who continue to believe that they can explain this freedom by empirical principles, like any other natural capacity. They regard it as a *psychological* property, whose explanation would depend solely on a more exact investigation of the *nature of the soul* and of the incentives of the will, and not as a *transcendental* predicate of the causality of a being that belongs to the world of sense (which is in fact all that matters here). In so doing they do away with the splendid disclosure that comes to us through pure practical reason by means of the moral law—the disclosure, namely, of an intelligible world through the realization of the otherwise transcendent concept of freedom—and with it the moral law itself, which admits no empirical determining ground whatever. It will therefore be

13 Plato (c. 428–348 BC); in the Republic (Book VII) he prizes mathematics for drawing the mind toward pure truth rather than for its practical uses.

necessary to add something here to guard against this illusion, and to show *empiricism* in all the nakedness of its shallowness.

FREEDOM AND NATURAL NECESSITY

Freedom can be saved only by assigning natural necessity to appearances and freedom to things in themselves.

The concept of causality as *natural necessity*, as distinct from causality as *freedom*, concerns only the existence of things insofar as it is *determinable in time*, and hence concerns them as appearances, in contrast to their causality as things in themselves. Now if one takes the determinations of the existence of things in time for determinations of things in themselves (which is the most usual way of representing them), then necessity in the causal relation cannot be reconciled with freedom in any way; they are instead contradictorily opposed to each other. For from the former it follows that every event, and consequently also every action, that takes place at a point in time is necessary under the condition of what was in the preceding time. Now since past time is no longer in my power, every action I perform must be necessary through determining grounds *that are not in my power*; that is, at the point in time at which I act, I am never free. Indeed, even if I assumed my whole existence to be independent of any external cause (of God, say), [95] so that the determining grounds of my causality, and even of my whole existence, were not outside me at all, this would still not in the least transform that natural necessity into freedom. For at every point in time I still stand under the necessity of being determined to act by *what is not in my power*; and the series of events, infinite *a parte priori*, which I would only ever continue according to an already predetermined order and would never begin of myself, would be a continuous chain of nature, and so my causality would never be freedom.[14]

If, then, one wants to attribute freedom to a being whose existence is determined in time, one cannot, to that extent at

least, exempt it from the law of the natural necessity of all events in its existence, and hence also of its actions; for that would be tantamount to handing it over to blind chance. But since this law unavoidably concerns all causality of things insofar as their *existence in time* is determinable, freedom would have to be rejected as a null and impossible concept if this were the way in which one also had to represent the *existence of these things in themselves*. Consequently, if one still wants to save freedom, no way remains but to ascribe the existence of a thing insofar as it is determinable in time, and hence also its causality according to the law of *natural necessity, merely to appearance*, and to ascribe *freedom* to *the same being as a thing in itself*. This is certainly unavoidable if one wants to retain both of these mutually repugnant concepts together. But in application, when one wants to explain them as united in one and the same action, and so to explain this union itself, great difficulties arise that seem to make such a union unworkable.

If I say of a man who commits a theft that this deed is, according to the natural law of causality, a necessary result of the determining grounds of the preceding time, then it was impossible for it to have been left undone. How, then, can judging according to the moral law make any difference here, and presuppose that it could nevertheless have been left undone, because the law says it ought to have been left undone? That is, how can someone be called entirely free, at the same point in time and with regard to the same action, at which, and in the same respect, he nevertheless stands under an unavoidable [96] natural necessity? To seek a way out by merely adapting the *kind* of determining grounds of one's causality according to natural law to a *comparative* concept of freedom (according to which something is sometimes called a free effect if its determining natural ground lies *internally* in the acting being—for example, what a thrown body does when it is in free motion, where one uses the word freedom because, while it is in flight, it

14 *A parte priori*: Latin, "on the side of what comes before," i.e. infinite in the backward direction.

is not driven by anything from outside; or as we also call the motion of a clock a free motion, because it moves its hands itself, so that they need not be pushed from outside—and in the same way to call human actions free, although they are necessary through their determining grounds, which precede them in time, because they are still internal representations produced by our own powers, desires generated by these representations according to the occasioning circumstances, and hence actions brought about at our own discretion): this is a wretched subterfuge. Some still let themselves be put off with it, and so think they have solved, with a little quibbling over words, that difficult problem at whose solution millennia have labored in vain, and whose solution is therefore hardly likely to be found lying so entirely on the surface. For in the question of that freedom which must be laid at the basis of all moral laws and of the imputation that accords with them, it does not matter at all whether the causality determined according to a natural law is necessary through determining grounds lying within the subject or *outside* it, and, in the first case, whether through instinct or through determining grounds thought by reason. If these determining representations, by the admission of these very men themselves, nevertheless have the ground of their existence in time, and indeed in the *previous state*, and this in turn in a preceding one, and so on, then these determinations may always be internal; they may have psychological and not mechanical causality, that is, produce action through representations and not through bodily motion—yet they are always *determining grounds* of the causality of a being insofar as its existence is determinable in time, and hence under necessitating conditions of past time, which, when the subject is to act, are therefore *no longer in its power*. They thus bring with them psychological freedom, to be sure (if one insists on using this word for a merely internal concatenation of the soul's representations), but natural necessity nonetheless, and so they leave no *transcendental* [97] *freedom*. This must be thought as independence from everything empirical, and so from nature in general, whether

nature is considered as an object of inner sense merely in time, or also of outer sense in space and time together. Without this freedom (in the latter, proper sense), which alone is practical *a priori*, no moral law and no imputation according to it is possible. Precisely for this reason one can also call all necessity of events in time according to the natural law of causality the *mechanism* of nature, although one does not mean by this that the things subject to it must be actual material *machines*. Here one looks only to the necessity of the connection of events in a time series as it unfolds according to natural law, whether one calls the subject in which this sequence takes place *automaton materiale*, when the machinery is driven by matter, or, with Leibniz, *spirituale*, when it is driven by representations. And if the freedom of our will were none other than the latter (say, psychological and comparative, not also transcendental, that is,[15] absolute), it would at bottom be no better than the freedom of a turnspit, which, once it has been wound up, also performs its movements of itself.[16]

Now, to remove the apparent contradiction between the mechanism of nature and freedom in one and the same action in the case before us, one must recall what was said in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, or follows from it. Natural necessity, which cannot coexist with the freedom of the subject, attaches merely to the determinations of a thing that stands under conditions of time, and so only to those of the acting subject as appearance. To this extent, therefore, the determining grounds of each of its actions lie in what belongs to past time and is *no longer in its power* (and among these must also be counted its deeds already committed, and the character, as phenomenon, that is determinable for it through them in its own eyes). But the very same subject, which on the other hand is also conscious of itself as a thing in itself, also considers its existence *insofar as it does not*

15 *Automaton materiale* / *spirituale*: Latin, "material / spiritual automaton." Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) called the soul a spiritual automaton, its states unfolding from within by their own law.
16 Turnspit: a clockwork device that turns a roasting spit once wound up.

stand under conditions of time, and itself as determinable only through laws that it gives itself through reason. In this existence of its own nothing precedes its determination of the will. Rather, every action, and in general [98] every determination of its existence changing in accordance with inner sense, even the whole sequence of its existence as a sensible being, is to be regarded, in the consciousness of its intelligible existence, as nothing but a consequence, and never as a determining ground, of its causality as *noumenon*. In this respect, then, the rational being can rightly say of every action contrary to the law that he performs—even though, as appearance, it is sufficiently determined in the past and to that extent inescapably necessary—that he could have refrained from it. For this action, with all the past that determines it, belongs to a single phenomenon of his character, a character he gives himself, and according to which he imputes to himself, as a cause independent of all sensibility, the causality of those appearances themselves.

CONSCIENCE AND REMORSE

Conscience and remorse confirm that we impute our deeds to ourselves as free, whatever their causes.

With this the verdicts of that wondrous faculty in us which we call conscience also agree perfectly. A man may use all the art he likes to paint to himself a piece of unlawful conduct that he remembers as an unintentional slip, as mere carelessness, which can never be entirely avoided, and hence as something in which he was swept along by the stream of natural necessity, and so to declare himself blameless. He nonetheless finds that the advocate who speaks in his favor can by no means silence the accuser within him, if he is conscious that at the time he did the wrong he was in his right mind, that is, in the use of his freedom. And yet he *explains* his offense to himself from a certain bad habit, brought on by gradually neglecting to attend to himself, to such a degree that he can regard the offense as its natural consequence—without this being able to protect him against the

self-reproach and the rebuke he directs at himself. On this, too, is grounded the remorse over a deed committed long ago, each time it is remembered: a painful feeling produced by the moral disposition. It is practically empty insofar as it cannot serve to undo what has been done, and would even be absurd—as *Priestley*, a genuine and consistent *fatalist*, in fact declares it to be. (For this candor he deserves more approval than those who, while in fact maintaining the mechanism of the will and its freedom only in words, still want it to be thought that they include imputation—though without making the possibility of such imputation comprehensible— [99] in their syncretistic system.) Yet as pain it is entirely legitimate, because reason, when it is a matter of the law of our intelligible existence (the moral law), recognizes no difference of time. It asks only whether the event belongs to me as my deed, and then always connects the same feeling with it morally, whether it happened just now or long ago.[17] For *sensible life*, with respect to the *intelligible* consciousness of its existence (freedom), has the absolute unity of a single phenomenon. Insofar as this phenomenon contains merely appearances of the disposition that concerns the moral law (appearances of the character), it must be judged not according to the natural necessity that belongs to it as appearance, but according to the absolute spontaneity of freedom. One may therefore grant that if it were possible for us to have so deep an insight into a person's cast of mind, as it shows itself through inner as well as outer actions, that every incentive to them, even the slightest, became known to us, along with all the external occasions acting on those incentives, we could calculate a person's future conduct with certainty, like an eclipse of the moon or the sun—and could nevertheless maintain that the person is free. For if we were capable of yet another view (which, to be sure, has not been granted us at all; in its place we have only the concept of reason), namely an intellectual intuition of the same subject, we would realize that this whole chain of appearances,

17 Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), English chemist and theologian, who defended "philosophical necessity," a thoroughgoing determinism.

with respect to whatever can concern the moral law, depends on the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself, for whose determination no physical explanation whatever can be given. In the absence of this intuition, the moral law assures us of this difference: between the relation of our actions, as appearances, to the sensible being of our subject, and the relation by which this sensible being is itself referred to the intelligible substrate in us. — In this regard, which is natural to our reason though inexplicable, judgments can also be justified that, though passed in all conscientiousness, nevertheless seem at first sight to conflict entirely with all equity. There are cases in which people show, from childhood on, and even under an upbringing that was beneficial to others brought up alongside them, such early wickedness, and continue to grow in it into their adult years, that they are taken for born villains and held to be wholly incorrigible [100] as far as their cast of mind is concerned. Yet they are judged just the same for what they do and leave undone; their crimes are reproached to them as guilt just the same; indeed, they themselves (the children) find these reproaches as fully grounded as if, despite the hopeless natural constitution of mind ascribed to them, they remained just as accountable as any other human being. This could not happen unless we presupposed that everything that springs from a person's choice (as every deliberately performed action undoubtedly does) has as its ground a free causality, which from early youth expresses its character in its appearances (the actions). These appearances, because of the uniformity of conduct, make recognizable a natural connection; but this connection does not make the evil constitution of the will necessary. Rather, it is the consequence of evil and unchangeable principles freely adopted, which make the person only all the more reprehensible and deserving of punishment.

GOD AS CREATOR AND HUMAN FREEDOM

If God creates substances, are we mere automata? Only the ideality of time answers this.

But one more difficulty lies ahead for freedom, insofar as it is to be united with the mechanism of nature in a being that belongs to the world of sense—a difficulty that, even after everything so far has been granted, still threatens freedom with its complete downfall. But in the face of this danger, one circumstance at the same time gives hope of an outcome still favorable to the defense of freedom: namely, that the same difficulty presses far more heavily (in fact, as we shall soon see, solely) on the system in which existence determinable in time and space is taken for the existence of things in themselves. It therefore does not compel us to give up our chief presupposition—the ideality of time as a mere form of sensible intuition, and hence as a mere mode of representation that belongs to the subject as belonging to the world of sense—but only requires us to reconcile freedom with this idea.

For even if it is granted to us that the intelligible subject can still be free with respect to a given action, although as a subject that also belongs to the sensible world it is mechanically conditioned with respect to that same action, it nevertheless seems that as soon as one assumes that *God*, as the universal original being, is *the cause* also *of the existence of substance*—a proposition that can never be given up without also giving up the concept of God as the being of all beings, and with it his all-sufficiency, on which everything in theology depends—one must also grant that human actions have their determining ground in [101] *something wholly beyond their power*: namely, in the causality of a supreme being distinct from the human being, on which the existence of the human being and the entire determination of his causality depend completely and utterly. Indeed, if the actions of the human being, as they belong to his determinations in time, were determinations of him not merely as appearance but as a

thing in itself, freedom could not be saved. The human being would be a marionette, or an automaton of Vaucanson's, built and wound up by the supreme master of all works of art. Self-consciousness would indeed make him a *thinking* automaton; but in it the consciousness of his own spontaneity, if this were taken for freedom, would be mere delusion. For this spontaneity deserves the name only in a comparative sense: the nearest determining causes of his movement, and a long series of their determining causes going back from them, are indeed internal, but the last and highest cause is nonetheless to be found entirely in an alien hand.[18] I therefore do not see how those who still insist on regarding time and space as determinations belonging to the existence of things in themselves mean to avoid the fatalism of actions here. Or, if they so bluntly grant (as the otherwise acute Mendelssohn did) that time and space are conditions necessarily belonging only to the existence of finite and derived beings, but not to that of the infinite original being, I do not see how they mean to justify themselves—where they get the authority to make such a distinction—or even how they mean so much as to escape the contradiction[19] they commit when they regard existence in time as a determination necessarily attaching to finite things in themselves. For God is the cause of this existence; but he cannot be the cause of time (or space) itself, since time must be presupposed as a necessary *a priori* condition of the existence of things. Consequently his causality with respect to the existence of these things must itself be conditioned in terms of time; and then all the contradictions with the concepts of his infinity and independence must unavoidably arise. For us, on the other hand, it is quite easy to distinguish the determination of the divine existence, as independent of all conditions of time, from that of a being of the sensible world: it is the distinction between the *existence of a being in itself* and that

18 Jacques de Vaucanson (1709–1782), French engineer famous for lifelike mechanical automata such as a flute player and a "digesting" duck.

19 Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), German-Jewish philosopher of the Enlightenment; Kant has in mind his *Morning Hours* (1785).

of a *thing in appearance*. Hence if that ideality of time and space [102] is not accepted, only *Spinozism* remains. In Spinozism, space and time are essential determinations of the original being itself, while the things dependent on it (and so we ourselves as well) are not substances but merely accidents inhering in it. For if these things exist merely as its effects *in time*, and time were the condition of their existence in itself, then the actions of these beings would also have to be merely its actions, which it performed somewhere and at some time.[20] Hence Spinozism, despite the absurdity of its fundamental idea, argues far more consistently than can be done on the theory of creation, when beings that are taken to be substances, and that exist in themselves *in time*, are regarded as effects of a supreme cause and yet not at the same time as belonging to that cause and its action, but as substances in their own right.

The difficulty just mentioned is resolved briefly and clearly as follows. If existence *in time* is merely a sensible way of representing the thinking beings in the world, and consequently does not concern them as things in themselves, then the creation of these beings is a creation of things in themselves. For the concept of a creation does not belong to the sensible way of representing existence and causality, but can be referred only to noumena. Consequently, when I say of beings in the sensible world that they are created, I am to that extent regarding them as noumena. Just as it would therefore be a contradiction to say that God is a creator of appearances, so it is also a contradiction to say that as creator he is the cause of actions in the sensible world, and hence of actions as appearances, even though he is the cause of the existence of the acting beings (as noumena). Now if it is possible (provided only that we take existence in time to be something that holds merely of appearances, not of things in themselves) to affirm freedom without detriment to the natural mechanism of actions as appearances, then the fact that the acting beings are creatures cannot make the slightest

20 Spinozism: the doctrine of Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) that there is only one substance, God or nature, of which all finite things are modes.

difference here. For creation concerns their intelligible existence, not their sensible existence, and so cannot be regarded as the determining ground of appearances. It would turn out quite differently, however, if the beings of the world existed as things in themselves *in time*; for then the creator of substance would at the same time be the author of the entire machinery in that substance.

Of such great importance is the separation of time (as well as space) from the existence of things in themselves that was carried out in the *Critique of Pure Speculative* [103] *Reason*.

It will be said, however, that the solution to the difficulty presented here is itself very difficult and hardly admits of a lucid presentation. But is any other solution that has been attempted, or may be attempted, easier and more comprehensible? One might rather say that the dogmatic teachers of metaphysics have shown more cunning than candor in keeping this difficult point as far out of sight as possible, in the hope that if they did not speak of it at all, hardly anyone would think of it either. If a science is to be helped, all its difficulties must be *uncovered*, and even those must be *sought out* that still lie hidden in its path. For each of them calls for a remedy that cannot be found without bringing the science some growth, whether in scope or in precision; in this way the very obstacles become means of furthering the science's thoroughness. If, on the contrary, the difficulties are deliberately concealed, or removed merely by palliatives, then sooner or later they break out into incurable ills that ruin the science in a complete skepticism.

WHY FREEDOM ALONE EXTENDS REASON

Of all the ideas of reason, only freedom gains practical reality, through the principle of morality.

It is really the concept of freedom alone, among all the ideas of pure speculative reason, that brings about so great an extension in the field of the supersensible, even if only with respect to practical cognition. So I ask myself: *how is it that this concept, to*

the exclusion of the others, has been granted such great fruitfulness, whereas the others do indeed mark out the empty place for possible pure beings of the understanding, but cannot determine the concept of them by anything at all? I soon grasp that, since I can think nothing without a category, a category must first be sought out in the idea of freedom with which I am concerned—an idea of reason—and that here it is the category of *causality*. I grasp, too, that although no corresponding intuition can be supplied for the *concept of reason*, freedom, since it is an extravagant concept, nevertheless a sensible intuition must first be given for the *concept of the understanding* (causality), for whose synthesis *the former* demands the unconditioned; for it is only by this intuition that the concept of the understanding is first assured of objective reality. [104] Now all the categories are divided into two classes: the *mathematical*, which bear merely on the unity of synthesis in the representation of objects, and the *dynamical*, which bear on the unity of synthesis in the representation of the existence of objects. The first class (the categories of quantity and quality) always contain a synthesis of the *homogeneous*. In such a synthesis the unconditioned for what is conditioned and given in sensible intuition in space and time can never be found at all, since it would itself have to belong to space and time and so would always in turn be conditioned. That is why, in the Dialectic of pure theoretical reason, the two opposed ways of finding the unconditioned and the totality of conditions for such a synthesis were both false. The categories of the second class (those of the causality and the necessity of a thing) did not require this homogeneity (of the conditioned and the condition in the synthesis) at all. For here what was to be represented was not how the intuition is put together from a manifold within it, but only how the existence of the conditioned object corresponding to it is added to the existence of the condition (as connected with it in the understanding). And there it was permissible to posit the unconditioned in the intelligible world for what is thoroughly conditioned in the sensible world (both with respect to causality and with respect to the contingent existence

of things themselves), though the unconditioned otherwise remained undetermined, and to make the synthesis transcendent. Hence it was also found, in the Dialectic of pure speculative reason, that the two seemingly opposed ways of finding the unconditioned for the conditioned—for example, in the synthesis of causality, to think for what is conditioned in the series of causes and effects in the sensible world a causality that is not further conditioned sensibly—do not in fact contradict each other. It was found that one and the same action which, as belonging to the sensible world, is always sensibly conditioned, that is, mechanically necessary, can at the same time also have as its ground a sensibly unconditioned causality, as belonging to the causality of the acting being insofar as that being belongs to the intelligible world, and so can be thought as free. Now everything depended simply on this *can* being turned into an *is* —that is, on our being able to prove in an actual case, as it were through a fact, that certain actions presuppose such a causality (intellectual, sensibly unconditioned), whether these actions are actual or only commanded, that is, objectively and practically necessary. We could not hope to meet with this connection in actions actually given in experience, as events in the sensible world, [105] because causality through freedom must always be sought outside the sensible world, in the intelligible. But things other than sensible beings are not given to us for perception and observation. So nothing remained but that some incontestable and indeed objective principle of causality be found, one that excludes every sensible condition from its determination—that is, a principle in which reason no longer appeals to something *else* as determining ground with respect to causality, but itself already contains that determining ground through the principle, and in which it is therefore practical itself as *pure reason*. This principle, however, needs no searching and no inventing. It has long been present in the reason of all human beings, incorporated into their very being, and it is the principle of *morality*. Therefore that unconditioned causality, and the faculty of it, freedom, and with freedom a being (I myself) that belongs to

the sensible world and yet at the same time belongs to the intelligible world, are not merely thought indeterminately and problematically (which speculative reason could already establish as feasible), but are even *cognized* as *determined* and assertorically *with respect to the law* of their causality. And so the reality of the intelligible world has been given to us, and indeed *determined* in a practical respect; and this determination, which for theoretical purposes would be *transcendent* (extravagant), is *immanent* for practical purposes. We could not, however, take any such step with respect to the second dynamical idea, namely that of a *necessary being*. We could not get up to it from the sensible world without the mediation of the first dynamical idea. For were we to try, we would have to have ventured the leap of leaving behind everything that is given to us and swinging ourselves up to that of which nothing is given to us either, by means of which we could mediate the connection of such an intelligible being with the sensible world (since the necessary being would have to be cognized as given *outside us*). With respect to *our own subject*, on the contrary, this is entirely possible, as is now plain to see: our subject cognizes itself through the moral law *on the one hand* as an intelligible being (by virtue of freedom), and *on the other hand* as active in the sensible world in accordance with this determination. The concept of freedom alone allows us to find the unconditioned and intelligible for the conditioned and sensible without having to go outside ourselves. For it is our reason [106] itself that, through the supreme and unconditioned practical law, cognizes itself and the being that is conscious of this law (our own person) as belonging to the pure world of the understanding—and indeed even with a determination of the way in which, as such, it can be active. So it can be understood why, in the entire faculty of reason, *only the practical* can be what helps us beyond the sensible world and provides us with cognitions of a supersensible order and connection—cognitions which, for that very reason, can of course be extended only as far as is needed for the pure practical purpose.

Let me be permitted on this occasion to draw attention to just one more thing. Every step one takes with pure reason, even in the practical field, where one pays no attention whatever to subtle speculation, nevertheless connects so precisely, and indeed of its own accord, with every moment of the critique of theoretical reason, as if each step had been devised with deliberate caution merely to supply it with confirmation. Such exact agreement of the most important propositions of practical reason with the remarks of the critique of speculative reason—remarks that often seemed too subtle and unnecessary—is not sought in any way but turns up of its own accord (as anyone can convince himself, if only he is willing to pursue moral inquiries as far as their principles). It surprises and astonishes us. And it confirms the maxim, already recognized and praised by others, that in every scientific investigation one should pursue one's course undisturbed, with all possible exactness and candor, without troubling about what it might happen to offend against outside its own field, but should carry it through by itself, as far as one can, truthfully and completely. Frequent observation has convinced me that, once one has brought this business to an end, what halfway through it sometimes seemed to me very doubtful in view of other doctrines outside it—provided I only kept this doubt out of sight and attended solely to my business until it was completed—in the end agreed perfectly, and in an unexpected way, with what had been found of its own accord, without the slightest regard for those doctrines and without partiality or fondness for them. Writers would spare themselves many errors and much wasted effort (because it was built on illusion) if only they could resolve to set to work with a little more candor.

The dialectic of practical reason

Why practical reason, too, falls into illusion.

[107] Pure reason always has its dialectic, whether it is considered in its speculative or in its practical use. For it demands the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditioned, and this can be found only in things in themselves. But all concepts of things must be referred to intuitions, and for us human beings these can never be other than sensible; hence they let us cognize objects not as things in themselves but merely as appearances, and in the series of the conditioned and its conditions in appearances the unconditioned can never be found. So an unavoidable illusion arises from applying this idea of reason—the totality of conditions (and hence the unconditioned)—to appearances as if they were things in themselves (for they are always taken to be such in the absence of a critique to warn us). This illusion, however, would never be noticed as deceptive, if it did not betray itself through a *conflict* of reason with itself when it applies to appearances its principle of presupposing the unconditioned for everything conditioned. But this forces reason to track down this illusion—where it springs from and how it can be removed—which can be done only through a complete critique of the whole faculty of pure reason. So the antinomy of pure reason, which becomes evident in its dialectic, is in fact the most beneficial error into which human reason could ever have fallen. For it finally drives us to seek the key to escape from this labyrinth; and this key, once found, discloses also what we were not looking for and yet need: namely, a view into a higher, unchangeable order of things, in which we already are now, and in which we

can henceforth be directed by determinate precepts to continue our existence in conformity with the highest vocation of reason.
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How that natural dialectic is to be resolved in the speculative use of pure reason, and how error arising from an otherwise natural illusion is to be prevented, can be found in detail in the critique of that faculty. But reason fares no better in its practical use. As pure practical reason, it likewise seeks the unconditioned for the practically conditioned (which rests on inclinations and natural need)—and not as the determining ground of the will. Rather, even when this determining ground has been given (in the moral law), it seeks the unconditioned totality of the *object* of pure practical reason, under the name of the *highest good*.

To determine this idea practically, that is, sufficiently for the maxim of our rational conduct, is the task of the *doctrine of wisdom*; and this in turn, as a *science*, is *philosophy* in the sense in which the ancients understood the word. For them it was instruction in the concept in which the highest good is to be placed, and in the conduct by which it is to be attained. It would be well if we left this word with its ancient meaning, as a *doctrine of the highest good*, insofar as reason strives to make it into a *science*. For on the one hand the restricting condition attached to it would suit the Greek expression (which means love of *wisdom*), and yet at the same time would suffice to include under the name of philosophy the love of *science* as well, and so of all speculative cognition by reason, insofar as it serves reason both for that concept and for the practical determining ground—without letting us lose sight of the main end on account of which alone it can be called a doctrine of wisdom. On the other hand, it would also not be a bad thing to deter the self-conceit of anyone who ventured to claim the title of philosopher for himself, if one held up to him, by the very definition, the standard of self-estimation that would greatly lower his pretensions. For to be a *teacher of wisdom* would surely mean something more than a pupil who has still not come far enough to guide himself,

much less to guide others, with sure expectation of so high an end; it would mean a *master in the knowledge of wisdom*, which says more than a modest man will claim for himself. Philosophy, like [109] wisdom itself, would always remain an ideal. Objectively, this ideal is fully represented in reason alone; subjectively, for the person, it is only the goal of his unceasing striving. And only he is entitled to claim to possess it, under the assumed name of philosopher, who can also exhibit its unfailing effect in his own person as an example (in mastery of himself and in the unquestioned interest he takes above all in the general good)—which the ancients too demanded in order for someone to deserve that title of honor.

With regard to the dialectic of pure practical reason on the point of determining the concept *of the highest good*—a dialectic whose resolution, if it succeeds, lets us expect an effect just as beneficial as that of the theoretical dialectic, since the self-contradictions of pure practical reason, honestly set out and not concealed, compel a complete critique of its own faculty—we have only one more reminder to put first.

The moral law is the sole determining ground of the pure will. But since this law is merely formal (that is, it demands only the form of the maxim as universally legislative), as determining ground it abstracts from all matter, and hence from every object of volition. Hence, though the highest good may well be the whole *object* of a pure practical reason, that is, of a pure will, it is not on that account to be taken as the *determining ground* of that will; the moral law alone must be regarded as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion one's object. This reminder is of consequence in so delicate a case as the determination of moral principles, where even the slightest misinterpretation corrupts dispositions. For it will have been seen from the Analytic that if, prior to the moral law, one assumes some object under the name of a good as the determining ground of the will, and then derives the supreme practical principle from it, this would always bring about heteronomy and displace the moral principle.

It goes without saying, however, that if the moral law is already included in the concept of the highest good as its supreme condition, then the highest good is not merely the *object*: its concept, and the representation of its existence as possible through our practical reason, [110] is at the same time the *determining ground* of the pure will. For in that case it is in fact the moral law, already included and thought along with it in this concept, and no other object, that determines the will in accordance with the principle of autonomy. This order of the concepts in the determination of the will must not be lost sight of; otherwise one misunderstands oneself and believes one is contradicting oneself where everything in fact stands side by side in the most perfect harmony.

The highest good

The antinomy of practical reason and the postulates of immortality and God.

The concept of the *highest* already contains an ambiguity that can give rise to needless disputes if one does not attend to it. The highest can mean the supreme (*supremum*) or the complete (*consummatum*). The first is that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, subordinate to no other (*originarium*); the second is that whole which is not part of a still greater whole of the same kind (*perfectissimum*). That virtue (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of everything that may seem to us desirable, and hence also of all our pursuit of happiness, and so is the *supreme* good, was proved in the Analytic.[1] But it is not yet, on that account, the whole and complete good, as the object of the faculty of desire of rational finite beings; for that, *happiness* is also required—and not merely in the partial eyes of the person who makes himself an end, but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards the person in general as an end in itself in the world. For to need happiness, and also to be worthy of it, and yet not to partake of it, cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being that also had all power—even if we think of such a being only by way of experiment. Now insofar as virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person, and happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of the person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the *highest good*

1 Latin: *supremum*, "the highest in rank"; *consummatum*, "the completed"; *originarium*, "the original"; *perfectissimum*, "the most perfect."

of a possible world, this means the [111] whole, the complete good. Yet in it virtue, as the condition, is always the supreme good, since it has no further condition above it; whereas happiness is always something that is indeed pleasant to the one who possesses it, but is not by itself good absolutely and in every respect, but always presupposes morally lawful conduct as its condition.

Two determinations necessarily united in one concept must be connected as ground and consequence. And this *unity* is regarded either as *analytic* (logical connection) or as *synthetic* (real combination)—the first according to the law of identity, the second according to that of causality. The connection of virtue with happiness can therefore be understood in one of two ways. Either the endeavor to be virtuous and the rational pursuit of happiness would be not two different actions but entirely identical ones, in which case the former would need no other maxim as its basis than the latter. Or that connection is based on virtue's producing happiness as something distinct from the consciousness of virtue, as a cause produces an effect.

EPICUREANS AND STOICS

Two ancient schools tried to make virtue and happiness one concept, each in the opposite direction.

Of the ancient Greek schools there were really only two that, in determining the concept of the highest good, followed one and the same method to this extent: they did not let virtue and happiness count as two different elements of the highest good, and so sought the unity of the principle according to the rule of identity. But they parted ways again in choosing differently which of the two was the fundamental concept. The *Epicurean* said: to be conscious of one's maxim leading to happiness—that is virtue. The *Stoic* said: to be conscious of one's virtue is happiness. For the first, *prudence* amounted to morality; for the second, who chose a loftier name for virtue, *morality* alone was true wisdom.

One must regret that the acuteness of these men (whom one must at the same time admire for having already tried, in such early times, every conceivable path of philosophical conquest) was unhappily spent in brooding out an identity between concepts as extremely heterogeneous as those of happiness and virtue. But it suited the dialectical spirit of their times—which even now sometimes misleads subtle minds—to remove essential differences in principles, differences that can never be reconciled, by trying to turn them into a dispute about words, and so to contrive a seeming unity of the concept merely under [112] different names. This usually happens in cases where the union of heterogeneous grounds lies so deep or so high, or would require so complete a transformation of doctrines otherwise accepted in the philosophical system, that people shrink from going deeply into the real difference and prefer to treat it as a disagreement over mere formalities.

While both schools sought to brood out the sameness of the practical principles of virtue and of happiness, they did not agree with each other on how to force out this identity, but parted infinitely far from each other. The one placed its principle on the aesthetic side, the other on the logical side; the one in the consciousness of sensible need, the other in the independence of practical reason from all sensible determining grounds. According to the *Epicurean*, the concept of virtue already lay in the maxim of promoting one's own happiness; according to the *Stoic*, on the other hand, the feeling of happiness was already contained in the consciousness of one's virtue.[2] But what is contained in another concept is the same as a part of what contains it, not as the whole; and two wholes can moreover be specifically different from each other even though they consist of the very same material, namely if the parts in the two are combined into a whole in entirely different ways. The Stoic maintained that virtue is the *whole highest good*, and happiness only the consciousness of possessing it, as belonging to the state of the sub-

2 "Aesthetic" here in Kant's older sense: pertaining to sense and feeling, not to beauty.

ject. The Epicurean maintained that happiness is the *whole highest good*, and virtue only the form of the maxim for pursuing it, namely in the rational use of the means to it.

Now it is clear from the Analytic, however, that the maxims of virtue and those of one's own happiness are entirely heterogeneous with respect to their supreme practical principle. Far from being in agreement, although they belong to one highest good in order to make it possible, they greatly limit and impair each other in the same subject. So the question remains: *how is the highest good practically possible?* Despite all the *attempts at coalition* made so far, this remains an unsolved problem. But what makes it a problem hard to solve is given in the Analytic: namely, that happiness and morality are two specifically quite *different elements* of the highest good, and that their combination therefore *cannot be cognized analytically* [113] (as if, say, someone who seeks his happiness would find himself virtuous in this conduct through the mere analysis of his concepts, or someone who follows virtue would find himself *ipso facto* happy in the consciousness of such conduct), but is a *synthesis* of concepts.[3] But because this combination is cognized as *a priori*, and hence as practically necessary, and consequently not as derived from experience, and because the possibility of the highest good therefore rests on no empirical principles, the *deduction* of this concept will have to be *transcendental*. It is *a priori* (morally) necessary *to produce the highest good through freedom of the will*; so the condition of its possibility must also rest solely on *a priori* grounds of cognition.

I. THE ANTINOMY OF PRACTICAL REASON

Neither can desire for happiness ground virtue nor, in nature, can virtue guarantee happiness.

In the highest good that is practical for us—that is, the good to be made actual through our will—virtue and happiness are thought as necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by

3 *Ipso facto*: Latin, "by that very fact."

pure practical reason without the other also belonging to it. Now this combination (like every combination whatever) is either *analytic* or *synthetic*. But since this given combination cannot be analytic, as has just been shown, it must be thought synthetically, and indeed as the connection of cause with effect, because it concerns a practical good, that is, one that is possible through action. Therefore either the desire for happiness must be the motive for maxims of virtue, or the maxim of virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness. The first is *absolutely* impossible, because (as was proved in the Analytic) maxims that place the determining ground of the will in the longing for one's happiness are not moral at all and can ground no virtue. But the second is *also impossible*. For all practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as the result of the determination of the will, depends not on the moral dispositions of the will but on knowledge of the laws of nature and on the physical capacity to use them for one's purposes. Consequently no necessary connection of happiness with virtue in the world, adequate to the highest good, can be expected from even the most meticulous [114] observance of the moral laws. Now since the promotion of the highest good, which contains this connection in its concept, is an *a priori* necessary object of our will and is inseparably bound up with the moral law, the impossibility of the former must also prove the falsity of the latter. If, then, the highest good is impossible according to practical rules, the moral law, which commands us to promote it, must also be fantastic and directed to empty, imaginary ends, and hence false in itself.

II. CRITICAL RESOLUTION OF THE ANTINOMY

Virtue can produce happiness through an intelligible author of nature, so the highest good remains possible.

In the antinomy of pure speculative reason there is a similar conflict between natural necessity and freedom in the causality of events in the world. It was removed by proving that there is

no true conflict if the events, and even the world in which they occur, are regarded (as they ought to be) merely as appearances. For one and the same acting being, *as appearance* (even before its own inner sense), has a causality in the sensible world that always conforms to the mechanism of nature; but with respect to the same event, insofar as the acting person at the same time regards himself as *noumenon* (as pure intelligence, in his existence that is not determinable in time), he can contain a determining ground of that causality according to natural laws which is itself free from all natural law.

It is just the same with the present antinomy of pure practical reason. The first of the two propositions—that striving for happiness produces a ground of virtuous disposition—is *absolutely false*. But the second—that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness—is *not absolutely* false, but false only insofar as this disposition is regarded as the form of causality in the sensible world, and hence only if I take existence in that world to be the only kind of existence of a rational being; it is therefore false only *conditionally*. But I am not only entitled to think my existence also as a noumenon in a world of the understanding; I even [115] have in the moral law a purely intellectual determining ground of my causality (in the sensible world). So it is not impossible that the morality of disposition should have a connection—if not immediate, then mediate (by means of an intelligible author of nature), and indeed necessary—as cause with happiness as effect in the sensible world. In a nature that is merely an object of the senses, such a combination could never occur except contingently, and could not suffice for the highest good.

Thus, despite this seeming conflict of a practical reason with itself, the highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will, a true object of it. For it is practically possible, and the maxims of such a will, which refer to it as to their matter, have objective reality. This reality was at first threatened by that antinomy in the combination of morality with happiness according to a universal law—but only through a mere misun-

derstanding, because the relation between appearances was taken for a relation of things in themselves to these appearances.

If we find ourselves compelled to seek the possibility of the highest good—this goal of all their moral wishes, set out by reason for all rational beings—at such a distance, namely in connection with an intelligible world, it must seem strange that philosophers of ancient as well as modern times have nonetheless been able to find happiness in quite fitting proportion to virtue already *in this life* (in the sensible world), or to persuade themselves that they were conscious of it. For Epicurus as well as the Stoics exalted above everything the happiness that springs from the consciousness of virtue in life. The former was not so base-minded in his practical precepts as one might infer from the principles of his theory, which he used for explaining and not for acting, or as many interpreted them, misled by his using the word pleasure for contentment. Rather, he counted the most disinterested practice of the good among the ways of enjoying the most heartfelt joy; and frugality and the taming of the inclinations, such as the strictest moral philosopher may demand, belonged to his plan of pleasure (by which he understood the ever-cheerful heart). He differed from the Stoics chiefly only in placing the motive in this pleasure—which they, and rightly, refused to do. For on the one hand [116] the virtuous Epicurus, like many morally well-disposed men even today who do not reflect deeply enough on their principles, fell into the error of already presupposing the virtuous *disposition* in the persons for whom he first wanted to specify the incentive to virtue. (And in fact the upright man cannot find himself happy unless he is first conscious of his uprightness. For with that disposition, the reproaches his own way of thinking would compel him to make against himself for his transgressions, and his moral self-condemnation, would rob him of all enjoyment of the agreeableness his condition might otherwise contain.) But the question is: what first makes possible such a disposition and way of thinking—such a way of estimating the worth of one's

existence—since prior to it no feeling for moral worth in general would be found in the subject at all? If a human being is virtuous, he will certainly not enjoy life without being conscious of his uprightness in every action, however favorable fortune may be to him in its physical circumstances. But in order to make him virtuous in the first place, and so before he rates the moral worth of his existence so highly, can one really commend to him the peace of mind that will spring from the consciousness of an uprightness for which he as yet has no sense?

On the other hand, there always lies here the ground of an error of subreption (*vitium subreptionis*) and, as it were, of an optical illusion in the self-consciousness of what one *does* as distinct from what one *feels*—an illusion that even the most practiced person cannot entirely avoid. The moral disposition is necessarily combined with a consciousness of the determination of the will *immediately by the law*. Now the consciousness of a determination of the faculty of desire is always the ground of a satisfaction in the action it produces. But this pleasure, this satisfaction in oneself, is not the determining ground of the action. Rather, the determination of the will immediately, by reason alone, is the ground of the feeling of pleasure, and that determination remains a pure practical, not aesthetic, determination of the faculty of desire.[4] Now since this determination has inwardly exactly the same effect of an impulse to activity as a feeling of the agreeableness expected from the desired action would have had, we easily take what we ourselves do for something we merely feel passively, and mistake the moral [117] incentive for a sensible impulse—as always tends to happen in the so-called illusion of the senses (here of the inner sense). There is something very sublime in human nature in being determined to actions immediately by a pure law of reason; and even in the illusion of taking the subjective side of this intellectual determinability of the will for something aesthetic and the effect of a special sensible feeling (for an intellectual feeling would be a

4 *Vitium subreptionis*: Latin, "fault of subreption," a technical term for mistaking one kind of thing for another by a slip that goes unnoticed.

contradiction). It is also of great importance to draw attention to this property of our personality and to cultivate as well as possible the effect of reason on this feeling. But one must also beware of false praise of this moral determining ground as an incentive, attributing to it feelings of special joys as its grounds (when they are only consequences); for in doing so one degrades and disfigures the real, genuine incentive, the law itself, as if by a false foil.[5] Respect, then, and not gratification or enjoyment of happiness, is something for which no *antecedent* feeling underlying reason is possible (for such a feeling would always be aesthetic and pathological). As consciousness of the immediate necessitation of the will by the law, respect is hardly an analogue of the feeling of pleasure, although in relation to the faculty of desire it does exactly the same thing, but from different sources. Only by this way of representing it, however, can one attain what one seeks: namely, that actions be done not merely in conformity with duty (as a result of pleasant feelings) but from duty, which must be the true end of all moral education.

SELF-CONTENTMENT

Consciousness of virtue brings a negative satisfaction, independence from inclinations, rather than happiness.

But do we not have a word that would signify, not an enjoyment such as that of happiness, but nonetheless a satisfaction in one's existence—an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany the consciousness of virtue? Yes! This word is *self-contentment*, which in its proper meaning always indicates only a negative satisfaction in one's existence, in which one is conscious of needing nothing. Freedom, and the consciousness of it as a capacity to follow the moral law with a preponderant disposition, is *independence from the inclinations*, at least as determining (even if not as *affecting*) motives of our desire. And insofar as I am conscious of this freedom in following my moral max-

5 A foil is the metallic backing set behind a gem to heighten its sparkle; a false one distorts the stone's true color.

ims, it is the sole source of an unchangeable [118] contentment necessarily combined with it and resting on no special feeling; and this contentment can be called intellectual. The aesthetic kind (which is improperly so called), resting on the satisfaction of the inclinations, however refined they may be made, can never be adequate to what one thinks of it. For the inclinations change, grow with the indulgence one allows them, and always leave behind a still greater void than one had thought to fill. Hence they are always *burdensome* to a rational being; and even if it cannot lay them aside, they nevertheless wring from it the wish to be rid of them. Even an inclination to what conforms to duty (for example, to beneficence) can indeed greatly facilitate the effectiveness of *moral* maxims, but it cannot produce any. For in such a maxim everything must be based on the representation of the law as determining ground, if the action is to contain not merely *legality* but also *morality*. Inclination is blind and servile, whether it is good-natured or not; and where morality is concerned, reason must not merely play the guardian of inclination, but, without regard to it, must as pure practical reason attend entirely to its own interest alone. Even the feeling of compassion and of tender-hearted sympathy, if it precedes the consideration of what duty is and becomes the determining ground, is itself burdensome to right-thinking persons. It throws their considered maxims into confusion and produces the wish to be rid of it and subject to lawgiving reason alone.

From this one can understand how the consciousness of this capacity of a pure practical reason, through deed (virtue), can produce a consciousness of mastery over one's inclinations, and so of independence from them, and consequently also from the discontent that always accompanies them. It can thus produce a negative satisfaction with one's state, that is, *contentment*, which in its source is contentment with one's person. In this way (namely indirectly) freedom itself becomes capable of an enjoyment. This enjoyment cannot be called happiness, since it does not depend on the positive addition of a feeling; nor, strictly speaking, *blessedness*, since it does not include complete inde-

pendence from inclinations and needs. Yet it resembles blessedness, at least insofar as one's determination of the will can keep itself free from their influence; and so, at least in its origin, it is analogous to the self-sufficiency that can be ascribed only to the supreme being.

[119] From this resolution of the antinomy of practical pure reason it follows that in practical principles a natural and necessary connection between the consciousness of morality and the expectation of a happiness proportioned to it, as its consequence, can at least be thought as possible (though of course not yet, on that account, cognized and understood). It follows, on the other hand, that principles of the pursuit of happiness cannot possibly produce morality. So the *supreme* good (as the first condition of the highest good) is morality, while happiness does constitute the second element of the highest good—but in such a way that it is only the morally conditioned, yet necessary, consequence of the former. Only in this subordination is the *highest good* the whole object of pure practical reason, which must necessarily represent it as possible, since it is a command of that reason to contribute everything possible to producing it. But the possibility of such a combination of the conditioned with its condition belongs wholly to the supersensible relation of things and cannot be given at all according to laws of the sensible world, even though the practical consequence of this idea—namely, the actions aimed at making the highest good actual—belong to the sensible world. So we shall try to set out the grounds of that possibility, first with respect to what is immediately in our power, and then, second, in what reason offers us, as a supplement to our incapacity, for the possibility of the highest good (necessary according to practical principles) and what is not in our power.

III. THE PRIMACY OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

Speculative reason must accept propositions inseparably bound to pure practical reason's interest.

By the primacy among two or more things combined by reason, I understand the prerogative of one of them to be the first determining ground of the combination with all the rest. In a narrower, practical sense it means the prerogative of the interest of one insofar as the interest of the others is subordinated to it (and it cannot itself be ranked below any other). To every faculty of the mind one can ascribe an *interest*, that is, a principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted. Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all [120] the powers of the mind, and its own interest it determines itself. The interest of its speculative use consists in the *cognition* of the object up to the highest *a priori* principles; that of its practical use, in the determination of the *will* with respect to the final and complete end. What is required for the possibility of any use of reason at all—namely, that its principles and assertions must not contradict one another—forms no part of its interest, but is the condition of having reason at all. Only its extension, not mere consistency with itself, is counted as its interest.

If practical reason may not assume and think as given anything beyond what *speculative* reason could offer it from its own insight, then speculative reason has the primacy. But suppose practical reason had of itself original *a priori* principles with which certain theoretical positions were inseparably bound up, positions that nevertheless withdrew from every possible insight of speculative reason (though they must not contradict it either). Then the question is which interest is supreme (not which must give way, for the one does not necessarily conflict with the other): whether speculative reason, which knows nothing of all that practical reason offers for it to assume, must accept these propositions and, though they are extravagant for

it, try to unite them with its concepts as a foreign possession transferred to it; or whether it is entitled to follow its own separate interest stubbornly, and, according to the canonic of Epicurus, to reject as empty sophistry everything that cannot certify its objective reality by manifest examples to be set out in experience—however much it might be interwoven with the interest of the practical (pure) use of reason, and however little it might contradict the theoretical in itself—simply because it really does impair the interest of speculative reason to the extent that it removes the limits that speculative reason has set itself and abandons it to every absurdity or delusion of the imagination.[6]

Indeed, if practical reason were taken as the basis in so far as it is pathologically conditioned—that is, merely administering the interest of the inclinations under the sensible principle of happiness—this demand could not be made on speculative reason at all. *Muhammad's* paradise, or the melting union with the deity of the *theosophists* and *mystics*, according to each one's fancy, would force their [121] monstrosities on reason; and it would be just as well to have no reason at all as to surrender it in this way to every kind of dreaming. But if pure reason can be practical of itself, and actually is so, as the consciousness of the moral law shows, then it is still only one and the same reason that judges according to *a priori* principles, whether for theoretical or for practical purposes. And then it is clear that, even if its capacity in the theoretical respect is not sufficient to establish certain propositions affirmatively, while these propositions also do not contradict it, it must accept these very propositions as soon as they belong *inseparably to the practical interest* of pure reason. It must accept them as something offered to it from outside, which did not grow on its own soil but is nonetheless sufficiently certified, and try to compare and connect them with everything it has in its power as speculative reason. It must, however, acknowledge modestly that these are not its insights,

6 Epicurus' "canonic" was his doctrine of the criteria of truth, which grounded all knowledge in sensation.

but extensions of its use in another respect, namely the practical—which is not in the least contrary to its interest, since that interest consists in restricting speculative presumption.

In the combination of pure speculative with pure practical reason into one cognition, then, the latter has the *primacy*—provided, that is, that this combination is not *contingent* and arbitrary but grounded *a priori* on reason itself, and hence *necessary*. For without this subordination a conflict of reason with itself would arise. If they were merely set side by side (coordinated), the former would close its borders tightly and admit nothing from the latter into its domain, while the latter would nonetheless extend its borders over everything and, where its need required, try to include the former within its own. But pure practical reason cannot possibly be required to be subordinate to speculative reason, and so to reverse the order, since all interest is ultimately practical, and even the interest of speculative reason is only conditional and is complete in practical use alone.

IV. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AS A POSTULATE

Holiness requires endless progress, which requires the endless existence of the same rational being.

[122] The production of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. In such a will, however, the *complete conformity* of the dispositions to the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. This conformity must therefore be just as possible as its object, since it is contained in the same command to promote that object. But the complete conformity of the will to the moral law is *holiness*, a perfection of which no rational being in the world of sense is capable at any moment of its existence. Since it is nevertheless required as practically necessary, it can be found only in a *progress* going on *to infinity* toward that complete conformity; and according to principles of pure practical reason it is necessary to assume such a practical advance as the real object of our will.

This infinite progress, however, is possible only on the presupposition of an *existence* and personality of the same rational being that continue *to infinity* (which is called the immortality of the soul). The highest good is therefore practically possible only on the presupposition of the immortality of the soul; and so immortality, as inseparably bound up with the moral law, is a *postulate* of pure practical reason. (By a postulate I understand a *theoretical* proposition which cannot be proved as such, insofar as it attaches inseparably to a *practical* law that holds unconditionally *a priori*.)

The proposition about the moral vocation of our nature—that only in a progress going on to infinity can we attain complete conformity with the moral law—is of the greatest use, not merely with regard to its present service of making up for the inability of speculative reason, but also with respect to religion. Without it, either the moral law is entirely degraded from its *holiness*, by being artfully made out to be *lenient* (indulgent) and so suited to our comfort; or else one stretches one's vocation, and one's expectation along with it, toward an unattainable goal, namely a hoped-for complete acquisition of holiness of will, [123] and loses oneself in fanatical *theosophical* dreams wholly at odds with self-knowledge. Both only hinder the ceaseless *striving* toward punctual and thoroughgoing compliance with a command of reason that is strict and unindulgent, yet not ideal but true. For a rational but finite being, only progress to infinity from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible. The *Infinite One*, for whom the condition of time is nothing, sees in this series, endless for us, the whole of conformity with the moral law. And the holiness that his command unremittingly demands, so as to be consistent with his justice in the share of the highest good he allots to each, is to be found whole in a single intellectual intuition of the existence of rational beings. All that can fall to the creature with regard to the hope of this share would be the consciousness of its tried and tested disposition. From the progress it has made so far from worse to morally better, and from the unchangeable resolve that has thereby

become known to it, it may hope for a further uninterrupted continuation of this progress, however far its existence may extend, even beyond this life;[7] and so it may hope to be fully adequate to his will (without indulgence or remission, which do not square with justice)—never here, nor at any foreseeable future moment of its existence, but only in the [124] infinity of its duration (which God alone can survey).

V. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AS A POSTULATE

Happiness proportioned to morality requires a supreme cause of nature with understanding and will.

In the foregoing analysis the moral law led to a practical task prescribed by pure reason alone, without any help from sensible incentives: the necessary completeness of the first and principal part of the highest good, *morality*. And since this task can be fully accomplished only in an eternity, it led to the postulate of *immortality*. The very same law must also lead, just as disinterestedly as before and from mere impartial reason, to the possibility of the second element of the highest good, namely the *happiness* proportioned to that morality. That is, it must lead to the presupposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect: it must postulate the *existence of God* as necessarily

7 KANT'S NOTE. Yet the *conviction* that one's disposition is unchangeable in its progress toward the good seems likewise impossible for a creature by itself. For this reason Christian doctrine makes it derive solely from the same Spirit that works sanctification, that is, this firm resolve and with it the consciousness of steadfastness in moral progress. But even in the natural course of things, someone who is conscious of having persisted, through a long part of his life up to its end, in progress toward the better, and from genuine moral motives, may well allow himself the comforting hope, though not the certainty, that he will hold to these principles in an existence continued beyond this life as well. And although in his own eyes he is never justified here, nor may he ever hope to be, even with the hoped-for future growth of his natural perfection—and with it of his duties—he may still have, in this progress, a prospect of a *blessed* future. For this progress, though it concerns a goal pushed out to infinity, counts for God as possession; and *blessed* is the expression reason uses to designate a complete well-being independent of all contingent causes in the world. Like *holiness*, it is an idea that can be contained only in an infinite progress and its totality, and so is never fully attained by the creature.

belonging to the possibility of the highest good (which, as the object of our will, is necessarily connected with the moral legislation of pure reason). We shall set out this connection convincingly.

Happiness is the state of a rational being in the world for whom, in the whole of its existence, *everything goes according to wish and will*. It therefore rests on the harmony of nature with that being's entire end, and likewise with the essential determining ground of its will. Now the moral law, as a law of freedom, commands through determining grounds that are to be wholly independent of nature and of nature's harmony with our faculty of desire (as incentives). But the acting rational being in the world is not also the cause of the world and of nature itself. Hence there is not the slightest ground in the moral law for a necessary connection between morality and proportionate happiness in a being that belongs to the world as a part and so depends on it. For just this reason such a being cannot by its will be the cause of this nature, and cannot by its own powers make nature [125] harmonize thoroughly with its practical principles as far as its happiness is concerned. Nevertheless, in the practical task of pure reason, that is, in the necessary pursuit of the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we *ought* to seek to promote the highest good (which must therefore be possible after all). Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature, is also *postulated*—a cause that contains the ground of this connection, namely of the exact harmony of happiness with morality. This supreme cause, however, is to contain the ground of nature's harmony not merely with a law of the will of rational beings, but with the representation of this *law*, insofar as they make it the *supreme determining ground of the will*. It is to contain the ground of harmony, then, not merely with morals as to their form, but also with their morality as their motive, that is, with their moral disposition. Therefore the highest good in the world is possible only insofar as a supreme cause of nature is assumed that has a causality in keeping with the moral disposition. Now a being capable of actions

in accordance with the representation of laws is an *intelligence* (a rational being), and the causality of such a being in accordance with this representation of laws is its *will*. Therefore the supreme cause of nature, insofar as it must be presupposed for the highest good, is a being that is the cause (and consequently the author) of nature through *understanding* and *will*, that is, *God*. Consequently the postulate of the possibility of the *highest derived good* (the best world) is at the same time the postulate of the reality of a *highest original good*, namely of the existence of God. Now it was a duty for us to promote the highest good. So it is not merely permissible for us, but a necessity bound up with duty as a need, to presuppose the possibility of this highest good. And since the highest good obtains only under the condition of the existence of God, this inseparably connects the presupposition of God's existence with duty; that is, it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.

It must be carefully noted here that this moral necessity is *subjective*, that is, a need, and not *objective*, that is, itself a duty; for there can be no duty to assume the existence of anything (since this concerns only the theoretical use of reason). Nor is it meant that it is necessary to assume the existence of God *as a ground of all obligation in general* (for this rests, as has been sufficiently proved, solely on the [126] autonomy of reason itself). What belongs to duty here is only the endeavor to produce and promote the highest good in the world, whose possibility can therefore be postulated. But our reason finds this possibility thinkable only on the presupposition of a supreme intelligence, and so to assume the existence of such an intelligence is bound up with the consciousness of our duty. This assumption itself, however, belongs to theoretical reason. With respect to theoretical reason alone, considered as a ground of explanation, it can be called a *hypothesis*. But in relation to making intelligible an object that the moral law sets us as a task (the highest good), and hence to a need with a practical aim, it can be called *faith*, and indeed pure *rational faith*, because pure reason alone (in its the-

oretical as well as its practical use) is the source from which it springs.[8]

From this *deduction* it now becomes comprehensible why the *Greek* schools could never arrive at a solution of their problem of the practical possibility of the highest good. They always made the rule of the use that the human will makes of its freedom the sole and self-sufficient ground of this possibility, without, as they thought, needing the existence of God for it. They were indeed right to establish the principle of morals by itself, independently of this postulate, from the relation of reason alone to the will, and so to make it the *supreme* practical condition of the highest good; but that did not make it the *whole* condition of its possibility. The *Epicureans* had indeed adopted a wholly false principle of morals as the supreme one, namely that of happiness, and had passed off as a law a maxim of arbitrary choice according to each person's inclination. Yet they proceeded *consistently* enough in this respect: they degraded their highest good in the same way, in proportion to the baseness of their principle, and expected no greater happiness than can be gained by human prudence (to which temperance and the moderation of inclinations also belong). Such happiness, as everyone knows, must turn out meager enough and very variously according to circumstances—not even counting the exceptions that their maxims had to keep admitting, and that make them unfit to be laws. The *Stoics*, on the other hand, had quite rightly chosen their supreme practical principle, namely virtue, as the condition of the highest good. But in representing the degree of virtue required by its pure [127] law as fully attainable in this life, they not only strained the moral capacity of the *human being*, under the name of a *sage*, far beyond all the limits of his nature, and assumed something that contradicts all knowledge of human beings. Above all, they also refused to let the second *component* of the highest good, namely happiness, count as a distinct object of the human faculty of desire at all, and instead made their

8 *Vernunftglaube*: faith held on grounds of reason itself (here practical reason), as distinct from knowledge or mere opinion.

sage, like a divinity in the consciousness of the excellence of his person, wholly independent of nature (as regards his contentment). They exposed him to the ills of life but did not subject him to them (and at the same time represented him as free from evil). And so they actually left out the second element of the highest good, one's own happiness, placing it merely in acting and in contentment with one's personal worth, and thus including it in the consciousness of a moral cast of mind—though on this point they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF THE HIGHEST GOOD

Christian doctrine pairs holiness as a rule for this life with blessedness hoped for in eternity.

The doctrine of Christianity,[9] even if it is not yet regarded as a religious doctrine, gives on this point a concept of the highest [128] good (the kingdom of God) that alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason. The moral law is holy (unindulgent) and demands holiness of morals, although all the moral perfection a human being can attain is only ever virtue: that is, a law-abiding disposition from *respect* for the law, and hence con-

9 KANT'S NOTE. It is commonly held that the Christian precept of morals has no advantage in purity over the moral concept of the Stoics; yet the difference between the two is very evident. The Stoic system made the consciousness of strength of soul the pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn. And although its adherents spoke of duties, and even defined them quite well, they placed the incentive and the real determining ground of the will in an elevation of the cast of mind above the low incentives of the senses, which hold sway only through weakness of soul. For them, then, virtue was a certain heroism of the *sage*, who raises himself above the animal nature of the human being, is sufficient to himself, and lays duties before others while himself exalted above them and subject to no temptation to transgress the moral law. But they could not have done all this had they represented this law to themselves in the purity and strictness with which the precept of the Gospel does. If by an *idea* I understand a perfection to which nothing adequate can be given in experience, the moral ideas are not for that reason something extravagant, that is, something of which we could not even sufficiently determine the concept, or of which it is uncertain whether any object corresponds to it at all, as is the case with the ideas of speculative reason. Rather, as archetypes of practical perfection, they serve as the indispensable guiding rule of moral conduct and at the same time as the *standard of comparison*. Now if I consider *Christian morals* from its philosophical side, then, compared with the ideas of the Greek schools, it would appear as follows: the ideas of the *Cynics*, the *Epicureans*, the *Stoics* and the *Christians* are *natural simplicity*, *prudence*, *wisdom* and *holiness*. As regards the way of attaining them, the Greek philosophers differed from one another in that the Cynics found common *human understanding* sufficient for it, the others only the path of *science*; but both, then, found the mere *use of natural powers* sufficient. Christian morals, because it frames its precept (as it must) so purely and unindulgently, takes from human beings the confidence of being fully adequate to it, at least here in this life. Yet it also raises that confidence up again: if we act as well as lies in our *power*, we can hope that what does not lie in our power will come to our aid from elsewhere, whether or not we know in what way. *Aristotle* and *Plato* differed only as regards the *origin* of our moral concepts.

sciousness of a continual propensity to transgression, or at least to impurity, that is, the admixture of many spurious (non-moral) motives to compliance with the law; hence a self-esteem combined with humility. Thus, with regard to the holiness that the Christian law demands, this doctrine leaves the creature nothing but progress to infinity, but for that very reason also entitles it to hope for its own continuance to infinity. The *worth* of a disposition *completely* conforming to the moral law is infinite, because all possible happiness, in the judgment of a wise and all-powerful distributor of it, has no limitation other than rational beings' lack of conformity to their duty. But the moral law by itself does not *promise* any happiness; for according to concepts of an order of nature in general, happiness is not necessarily connected with compliance with the law. Christian moral doctrine now supplies this lack (of the second indispensable component of the highest good) by representing the world in which rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law as a *kingdom of God*, in which nature and morals are brought into a harmony, foreign to each of them by itself, by a holy author who makes the derived highest good possible. The *holiness* of morals is assigned to them as their [129] guiding rule already in this life, while the well-being proportioned to it, *blessedness*, is represented as attainable only in an eternity. For *the former* must always be the archetype of their conduct in every state, and progress toward it is already possible and necessary in this life; whereas *the latter*, under the name of happiness, cannot be attained at all in this world (so far as it depends on our capacity) and is therefore made solely an object of hope. Nevertheless, the Christian principle of *morals* itself is not theological (and so heteronomy), but autonomy of pure practical reason by itself. For it makes the knowledge of God and of his will the ground not of these laws, but only of attaining the highest good on condition of obeying them. And it places even the real *incentive* for obeying the laws not in their desired consequences but in the representation of duty alone, since wor-

thiness to obtain those consequences consists solely in the faithful observance of duty.

In this way the moral law, through the concept of the highest good as the object and final end of pure practical reason, leads to *religion*, that is, *to the recognition of all duties as divine commands—not as sanctions, that is, arbitrary decrees of an alien will, contingent in themselves*, but as essential laws of every free will in itself. These laws must nevertheless be regarded as commands of the supreme being, because only from a will that is morally perfect (holy and benevolent) and at the same time all-powerful can we hope for the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to set as the object of our striving, and so hope to attain it through harmony with this will. Here too, therefore, everything remains disinterested and grounded solely on duty, and neither fear nor hope may be laid down as the underlying incentives; for if they became principles, they would destroy the entire moral worth of actions. The moral law commands me to make the highest possible good in a world the final object of all my conduct. But I cannot hope to bring this about except through the harmony of my will with that of a holy and benevolent author of the world. And although in the concept of the highest good—as that of a whole in which the greatest happiness is represented as connected in the most exact proportion with the greatest degree of moral perfection (possible in creatures)—
130 *my own happiness* is included, it is nevertheless not my happiness but the moral law (which in fact strictly limits my unbounded desire for happiness to conditions) that is the determining ground of the will directed to promote the highest good.

MORALS AND RELIGION

Morals teaches how to become worthy of happiness; religion adds the hope of sharing in it.

Hence morals is not properly the doctrine of how we are to *make* ourselves happy, but of how we are to become *worthy* of happiness. Only when religion is added does there also arise the hope

of one day sharing in happiness to the degree that we have taken care not to be unworthy of it.

Someone is *worthy* of possessing a thing or a state when his being in possession of it harmonizes with the highest good. It is now easy to see that all worthiness depends on moral conduct, since in the concept of the highest good this conduct constitutes the condition of the rest (of what belongs to one's state), namely of one's share in happiness. From this it follows that *morals* in itself must never be treated as a *doctrine of happiness*, that is, as instruction in how to come to share in happiness; for it has to do solely with the rational condition (*conditio sine qua non* [the condition without which not]) of happiness, not with a means of acquiring it. But once morals (which merely imposes duties and does not hand out rules to self-interested wishes) has been set out completely, then, and only then—after the moral wish, grounded on a law, to promote the highest good (to bring the kingdom of God to us) has been awakened, a wish that could not previously have arisen in any self-interested soul, and after the step to religion has been taken for its sake—can this moral doctrine also be called a doctrine of happiness; for the *hope* of happiness first begins only with religion.

From this one can also see that if one asks about *God's final end* in creating the world, one must name not the *happiness* of the rational beings in it but *the highest good*. The highest good adds a further condition to that wish of these beings, namely the condition of being worthy of happiness, that is, the *morality* of these same rational beings, which alone contains the standard by which alone they can hope to share in happiness at the hand of a *wise* author. For since *wisdom*, considered theoretically, means *the knowledge of the highest good*, and practically *the* [131] *conformity of the will to the highest good*, one cannot attribute to a supreme, self-sufficient wisdom an end grounded merely on *benevolence*. For the effect of this benevolence (with regard to the happiness of rational beings) can be thought of as befitting the highest original good only under the limiting conditions of har-

mony with the *holiness*[10] of his will. Hence those who placed the end of creation in the glory of God (provided that this is not conceived anthropomorphically, as an inclination to be praised) have probably hit on the best expression. For nothing honors God more than what is most estimable in the world, respect for his command, the observance of the holy duty that his law imposes on us, when his glorious provision is added to crown so beautiful an order with commensurate happiness. If the latter (to speak in human terms) makes him worthy of love, by the former he is an object of worship (adoration). Even human beings can indeed win love by doing good, but never respect by that alone; so that the greatest beneficence does them honor only by being exercised in accordance with worthiness.

That in the order of ends the human being (and with him every rational being) is an *end in itself*, that is, can never be used merely as a means by anyone (not even by God) without at the same time being an end himself, and that *humanity* in our person must therefore be *holy* to ourselves, now follows of itself. For the human being is the *subject of the moral law*, and so of what is holy in itself, [132] for the sake of which and in agreement with which anything at all can be called holy. For this moral law is grounded on the autonomy of his will, as a free will, which by its universal laws must necessarily be able at the same time to *agree* with that to which it is to *subject* itself.

10 KANT'S NOTE. In this connection, and to make what is distinctive in these concepts recognizable, I add only this remark. We ascribe to God various attributes whose quality we also find appropriate to creatures, except that in him they are raised to the highest degree—for example, power, knowledge, presence, goodness, etc., under the names of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, omnibenevolence, etc. Yet there are three that are ascribed to God exclusively, and still without any addition of magnitude, and all of them are moral: he is the *only holy one*, the *only blessed one*, the *only wise one*; for these concepts already carry unlimitedness with them. Following their order, he is then also the *holy lawgiver* (and creator), the *benevolent ruler* (and preserver), and the *just judge*: three attributes that contain everything by which God becomes the object of religion, and in keeping with which the metaphysical perfections are added in reason of their own accord.

VI. ON THE POSTULATES IN GENERAL

Freedom, immortality and God are practical presuppositions that give reality to ideas of speculative reason.

The postulates all proceed from the principle of morality, which is not a postulate but a law by which reason determines the will immediately; and this will, just because it is so determined, as a pure will, requires these necessary conditions for compliance with its precept. These postulates are not theoretical dogmas but *presuppositions* from a necessarily practical point of view. So although they do not extend speculative knowledge, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason *in general* (by means of their relation to the practical), and entitle it to concepts whose very possibility it could not otherwise presume even to assert.

These postulates are those of *immortality*, of *freedom* considered positively (as the causality of a being insofar as it belongs to the intelligible world), and of the *existence of God*. The *first* flows from the practically necessary condition of a duration adequate to the complete fulfillment of the moral law; the *second* from the necessary presupposition of independence from the world of sense and of the capacity to determine one's will by the law of an intelligible world, that is, of freedom; the *third* from the necessity of the condition for such an intelligible world to be the highest good, through the presupposition of the highest independent good, that is, of the existence of God.

The aim at the highest good, made necessary by respect for the moral law, and the presupposition of its objective reality that flows from this aim, thus lead through postulates of practical reason to concepts that speculative reason could indeed pose as problems but could not solve. Thus: 1. To the concept in whose solution [133] speculative reason could commit nothing but *paralogisms* (namely, that of immortality). This was because it lacked the mark of permanence needed to complete the psychological concept of an ultimate subject, which is necessarily ascribed to

the soul in self-consciousness, so as to make it the real representation of a substance. Practical reason accomplishes this through the postulate of a duration required for conformity with the moral law in the highest good, as the whole end of practical reason. 2.[11] It leads to that of which speculative reason contained nothing but an *antinomy*, whose resolution it could ground only on a concept that was problematically thinkable, to be sure, but whose objective reality it could neither prove nor determine: namely the *cosmological* idea of an intelligible world and the consciousness of our existence in it. Practical reason does this by means of the postulate of freedom (whose reality it establishes through the moral law, and with it at the same time the law of an intelligible world, to which speculative reason could only point without being able to determine its concept). 3. To what speculative reason could indeed think but had to leave undetermined as a mere transcendental *ideal*—the *theological* concept of the original being—practical reason gives meaning (with a practical aim, that is, as a condition of the possibility of the object of a will determined by that law) as the supreme principle of the highest good in an intelligible world, through a moral legislation in that world that holds sovereign power.

But is our knowledge actually extended in this way by pure practical reason, and is what was *transcendent* for speculative reason *immanent* in practical reason? Certainly, but *only from a practical point of view*. For through this we know neither the nature of our soul, nor the intelligible world, nor the supreme being as they are in themselves. We have merely united the concepts of them in the *practical* concept *of the highest good* as the object of our will—and completely *a priori*, through pure reason, but only by means of the moral law and solely in relation to it, with regard to the object it commands. But how freedom is even possible, and how this kind of causality is to be represented theoretically and positively, is not thereby understood; it is only

11 *Paralogisms*: the fallacious inferences about the soul exposed in the Critique of Pure Reason; the "antinomy" and the "ideal" below likewise name parts of its Transcendental Dialectic.

postulated, through the moral law and for its sake, that there is such a causality. The same holds for the remaining ideas. No human understanding will ever fathom their possibility; but no sophistry will ever talk even the most ordinary person out of the conviction that they are [134] true concepts.

VII. A PRACTICAL EXTENSION WITHOUT SPECULATIVE KNOWLEDGE

The postulates extend reason for practical use without giving any theoretical knowledge of their objects.

To avoid becoming too abstract, we shall answer this question at once in its application to the present case.—To extend pure knowledge *practically*, an *aim* must be given *a priori*, that is, an end as an object (of the will) which, independently of all theoretical principles, is represented as practically necessary through an imperative that determines the will immediately (a categorical imperative); and here that end is the *highest good*. This, however, is not possible without presupposing three theoretical concepts (for which, because they are mere pure concepts of reason, no corresponding intuition can be found, and hence no objective reality along the theoretical path): namely freedom, immortality and God. Thus through the practical law, which commands the existence of the highest good possible in a world, the possibility of those objects of pure speculative reason is postulated—the objective reality that speculative reason could not secure for them. The theoretical knowledge of pure reason does thereby receive an increase, to be sure; but it consists merely in this: that those concepts, otherwise problematic (merely thinkable) for it, are now declared assertorically to be concepts to which objects actually belong. For practical reason unavoidably needs the existence of these objects for the possibility of its own object, the highest good, which is practically necessary without qualification; and theoretical reason is thereby entitled to presuppose them. But this extension of theoretical reason is no extension of speculation; that is, it does not allow us to make a positive use of it *from a theoretical point of view*. For since prac-

tical reason has achieved nothing more here than that those concepts are real and actually have their (possible) objects, while nothing of the intuition of those objects is given to us (which cannot even be demanded), no synthetic proposition is possible through this reality granted to them. Consequently this disclosure does not help us in the least from a speculative point of view, though it does help [135] with regard to the practical use of pure reason, by extending this knowledge of ours. The above three ideas of speculative reason are not yet in themselves cognitions; still, they are (transcendent) *thoughts* in which there is nothing impossible. Now, through an apodictic practical law, as necessary conditions of the possibility of what this law commands us *to make our object*, they receive objective reality, that is, we are shown by that law *that they have objects*, though without being able to indicate how their concept refers to an object; and this is not yet knowledge *of these objects*. For we cannot thereby judge anything synthetically about them, nor determine their application theoretically, and so cannot make any theoretical use of reason regarding them—which is what all speculative knowledge of them properly consists in. Nevertheless, theoretical knowledge—*not of these objects, it is true*, but of reason in general—was extended to the extent that the practical postulates did *give objects* to those ideas, since a merely problematic thought thereby first received objective reality. So it was not an extension of knowledge *of given supersensible objects*, but it was an extension of theoretical reason and of its knowledge with regard to the supersensible in general, insofar as reason was compelled to grant *that there are such objects*, without being able to determine them more closely, and so without being able to extend this knowledge of the objects themselves (which have now been given to it on practical grounds and only for practical use). Pure theoretical reason, for which all those ideas are transcendent and without object, owes this increase solely to its pure practical faculty. Here they become *immanent* and *constitutive*, since they are grounds of the possibility of *making real* the *necessary object* of pure practical reason (the highest good).

Otherwise they are *transcendent* and merely *regulative* principles of speculative reason, which do not require it to assume a new object beyond experience, but only to bring its use within experience closer to completeness. Once reason is in possession of this increase, however, it will go to work with those ideas as speculative reason (really only to secure its practical use) negatively, that is, not extending but purifying: on the one hand to keep off *anthropomorphism*, as the source of *superstition*, [136] or the seeming extension of those concepts through supposed experience; on the other hand to keep off *fanaticism*, which promises such extension through supersensible intuition or feelings of that kind. All these are obstacles to the practical use of pure reason, so warding them off certainly belongs to the extension of our knowledge from a practical point of view; and it is no contradiction to admit at the same time that reason has not gained the least thereby from a speculative point of view.

Every use of reason with regard to an object requires pure concepts of the understanding (*categories*), without which no object can be thought. These can be applied for the theoretical use of reason, that is, for theoretical knowledge, only insofar as intuition (which is always sensible) is also laid under them, and so merely in order to represent through them an object of possible experience. Here, however, what I would have to think through categories in order to know it are *ideas* of reason, which cannot be given in any experience at all. But here our concern is not with theoretical knowledge of the objects of these ideas, but only with whether they have objects at all. This reality is supplied by pure practical reason, and theoretical reason has nothing further to do here than merely to *think* those objects through categories. As we have clearly shown elsewhere, this can be done perfectly well without needing any intuition (whether sensible or supersensible), because the categories have their seat and origin in the pure understanding, independently of and prior to all intuition, solely as the faculty of thinking, and they always signify only an object in general, *in whatever way it may be given to us*. Now, insofar as the categories are to be applied to

those ideas, it is indeed not possible to give them any object in intuition. Yet *that such an object actually exists*—and hence that the category, as a mere form of thought, is not empty here but has meaning—is sufficiently assured to them through an object that practical reason indubitably presents in the concept of the highest good: that is, the *reality of the concepts* required for the possibility of the highest good is sufficiently assured. And yet this increase does not bring about the least extension of knowledge according to theoretical principles.

[137] Next, when these ideas of God, of an intelligible world (the kingdom of God) and of immortality are determined by predicates taken from our own nature, this determination must be regarded neither as a *sensualizing* of those pure ideas of reason (anthropomorphisms) nor as extravagant knowledge of *supersensible* objects. For these predicates are none other than understanding and will, considered moreover in the relation to each other in which they must be thought in the moral law, and so only insofar as a pure practical use is made of them. From everything else that attaches to these concepts psychologically, that is, insofar as we observe these faculties of ours empirically *in their exercise* (for example, that the human understanding is discursive, so that its representations are thoughts, not intuitions; that these follow one another in time; that the human will is always burdened with a dependence of its contentment on the existence of its object, and so on, which cannot be so in the supreme being), we then abstract. And so, of the concepts through which we think a pure being of understanding, nothing more remains than precisely what is required for the possibility of thinking a moral law. There is, then, a knowledge of God, but only in a practical relation. If we try to extend it into theoretical knowledge, we get an understanding of God that does not think but *intuits*, and a will directed to objects on whose existence its contentment does not in the least depend (I will not even mention the transcendental predicates, such as a magnitude of existence, that is, duration—which, however, does not take place in time, the only means we have of representing existence as a

magnitude). These are all properties of which we can form no concept fit for *knowledge* of the object. We learn from this that they can never be used for a theory of supersensible beings, and so are quite unable to ground speculative knowledge on this side; instead, they restrict their use solely to the practice of the moral law.

This last point is so evident, and can be proved so clearly by the facts, that one can confidently challenge all supposed *natural scholars of God* (a strange name)[12] to name even one property —of the understanding, say, or of the will—determining this [138] object of theirs (beyond the merely ontological predicates), about which it could not be incontrovertibly shown that, once everything anthropomorphic is separated from it, only the bare word remains to us, without our being able to connect with it the least concept from which an extension of theoretical knowledge could be hoped for.[13] With regard to the practical, however, there still remains to us, from the properties of an understanding and a will, the concept of a relation, to which the practical law (which determines precisely this relation of the understanding to the will *a priori*) gives objective reality. Once this has been done, reality is also given to the concept of the object of a morally determined will (the concept of the highest good), and with it to the conditions of its possibility, the ideas of God, freedom and immortality—but always only in relation to the practice of the moral law (not for any speculative purpose).

12 KANT'S NOTE. *Scholarship*, properly speaking, is only the sum of the *historical* sciences. Consequently only the teacher of revealed theology can be called a *scholar of God* . But if one also wanted to call someone who possesses the rational sciences (mathematics and philosophy) a scholar—although this would already conflict with the meaning of the word (which always counts as scholarship only what one must be *taught* outright, and so cannot discover by oneself through reason)—then the philosopher, with his knowledge of God as a positive science, might well cut too poor a figure to let himself be called a *scholar* on that account.
13 *Gottesgelehrter* (literally "one learned in God") was an ordinary German word for a theologian; the footnote turns on *Gelehrter*, "scholar, learned person."

THE CONCEPT OF GOD BELONGS TO MORALS

Neither physics nor metaphysics can determine the concept of God; only the moral law can.

After these reminders, the answer to the important question can now easily be found: *whether the concept of God is a concept belonging to physics* (and hence also to metaphysics, which contains only the pure *a priori* principles of physics in their universal meaning) *or to morals*. If, to *explain* arrangements of nature or their changes, one takes refuge in God as the author of all things, this is at least no physical explanation, and is in every case an admission that one has come to the end of one's philosophy. For one is forced to assume something of which one otherwise has no concept on its own, in order to form a concept of the possibility of what one sees before one's eyes. But to arrive through metaphysics from knowledge of *this* world at the concept of God and a proof of his existence *by sure inferences* is impossible. For in order to say that this world was possible only through a *God* (as we must think this concept), we would have to know it as the most perfect possible whole, and hence for this purpose know all possible worlds as well (in order to compare them with this one); that is, we would have to be omniscient. [139] And to know the existence of this being from mere concepts is utterly impossible, because every existential proposition—that is, one that says of a being of which I form a concept that it exists—is a synthetic proposition, that is, one by which I go beyond that concept and say more of it than was thought in the concept: namely, that an object *outside the understanding* is posited as corresponding to this concept *in the understanding*, which obviously cannot be derived by any inference. So there remains only one single procedure by which reason can arrive at this knowledge: namely, that as pure reason, starting from the supreme principle of its pure practical use (since this use is in any case directed merely to the *existence* of something as a consequence of reason), it determines its object. And here there

emerges, in its unavoidable task—the necessary direction of the will to the highest good—not only the necessity of assuming such an original being in relation to the possibility of this good in the world, but, most remarkably, something that the advance of reason along the path of nature wholly lacked: namely *a precisely determined concept of this original being*. Since we know only a small part of this world, and are still less able to compare it with all possible worlds, we can indeed infer from its order, purposiveness and magnitude a *wise*, *benevolent*, *powerful*, etc. author of it, but not his *omniscience*, *omnibenevolence*, *omnipotence*, and so on. One may quite well grant that we are entitled to make up for this unavoidable deficiency by a permissible and entirely reasonable hypothesis: namely, that if wisdom, benevolence, etc. shine forth in as many parts as offer themselves to our closer acquaintance, it will be the same in all the rest, and that it is therefore reasonable to ascribe every possible perfection to the author of the world. But these are not *inferences* on which we may pride ourselves for our insight; they are only liberties that can be allowed us, and that still need some further recommendation before we make use of them. On the empirical path (of physics), then, the concept of God always remains a *concept, not precisely determined*, of the perfection of the first being, so that it cannot be held adequate to the concept of a deity (and with metaphysics, in its transcendental part, nothing at all can be accomplished).

[140] I now try to hold this concept up to the object of practical reason, and I find that the moral principle admits it as possible only on the presupposition of an author of the world with the *highest perfection*. He must be *omniscient*, in order to know my conduct down to the innermost core of my disposition, in all possible cases and into all the future; *omnipotent*, in order to bestow on it the fitting consequences; likewise *omnipresent*, *eternal*, and so on. Thus the moral law, through the concept of the highest good as the object of a pure practical reason, determines the concept of the original being *as the supreme being* —something that the physical (and, carried higher, the meta-

physical), and hence the entire speculative course of reason could not achieve. The concept of God, therefore, is a concept belonging originally not to physics, that is, to speculative reason, but to morals; and the same can be said of the other concepts of reason that we dealt with above as its postulates in its practical use.

If in the history of Greek philosophy one finds no clear traces of a pure rational theology before *Anaxagoras*, the reason is not that the older philosophers lacked the understanding and insight to rise to it by way of speculation, at least with the help of an entirely reasonable hypothesis. What could have been easier, what more natural, than the thought that offers itself to everyone of its own accord: to assume, instead of indeterminate degrees of perfection in various world-causes, a single rational cause that has *all perfection*? But the evils in the world seemed to them far too weighty objections for them to consider themselves entitled to such a hypothesis.[14] They therefore showed understanding and insight precisely in not permitting themselves that hypothesis, and in searching instead among natural causes to see whether they might not find there the constitution and power required for an original being. But once this acute people had advanced so far in their inquiries as to treat even moral subjects philosophically—subjects about which other peoples had never done more than chatter—they first discovered a new need, namely a practical one, which did not fail to give them a determinate concept of the original being. In this, speculative reason was merely a spectator. At most it had the further merit of embellishing a concept that had not grown on its own soil, and of promoting, with a retinue [141] of confirmations from the study of nature that only now came forward, not the authority of this concept (which was already established) but merely the pomp of a supposed theoretical insight of reason.

From these reminders the reader of the *Critique of Pure Speculative Reason* will become fully convinced how extremely neces-

14 Anaxagoras (c. 500–428 BC): Greek philosopher who held that Mind (*nous*) set the cosmos in order.

sary, how beneficial for theology and morals, that laborious *deduction* of the categories was. For by this alone can two things be prevented. If one places the categories in the pure understanding, it prevents one from regarding them, with *Plato*, as innate, and from founding on them extravagant pretensions to theories of the supersensible to which no end can be seen, thereby turning theology into a magic lantern of phantoms of the brain. If one takes them to be acquired, it prevents one from restricting, with *Epicurus*, each and every use of them, even their use for practical purposes, merely to objects and determining grounds of the senses.[15] Now, however, the critique has proved in that deduction, *first*, that the categories are not of empirical origin but have their seat and source *a priori* in the pure understanding; and *second*, that since they are referred *to objects in general*, independently of the intuition of these objects, they bring about *theoretical cognition* only when applied to *empirical* objects, but that, when applied to an object given through pure practical reason, they nevertheless serve for the *determinate thinking* of the *supersensible*—though only insofar as the supersensible is determined solely through such predicates as necessarily belong to the pure *practical purpose* given *a priori* and to its possibility. The speculative restriction of pure reason and its practical extension first bring it into that *relation of equality* in which reason in general can be used purposively. And this example proves better than any other that the path to *wisdom*, if it is to be secure and not become impassable or misleading, must for us human beings unavoidably pass through science—though one can be convinced that science leads to that goal only once it has been completed.

15 Plato's doctrine of recollection held that knowledge of the Forms is innate in the soul.

VIII. ASSENT FROM A NEED OF PURE REASON

A need grounded in duty justifies a pure practical rational faith, which is never commanded.

[142] A *need* of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to *hypotheses*; a need of pure practical reason, however, leads to *postulates*. For in the first case I ascend from what is derived as high in the series of grounds *as I please*, and I need an original ground not in order to give objective reality to what is derived (for example, the causal connection of things and changes in the world), but only in order to satisfy my inquiring reason completely with respect to it. Thus I see order and purposiveness in nature before me, and I do not need to proceed to speculation in order to assure myself of their *actuality*, but only in order to *explain* them, to *presuppose a deity* as their cause. And since an inference from an effect to a determinate cause—above all to a cause as precisely and as completely determined as the one we have to think in God—is always uncertain and precarious, such a presupposition cannot be carried further than the degree of the most reasonable opinion for us human beings.[16] A need of pure *practical* reason, by contrast, is grounded on a *duty*: to make something (the highest good) the object of my will, in order to promote it with all my powers. In doing so, however, I must presuppose its possibility, and hence also the conditions of this possibility, namely God, freedom and immortality, because I cannot prove these through my speculative reason, though neither can I refute them. This duty is grounded on something that is, admittedly, entirely independent of these latter presuppositions and is

16 KANT'S NOTE. But even here we could not plead a need *of reason* if there were not before our eyes a problematic but nonetheless unavoidable concept of reason, namely that of an absolutely necessary being. This concept now demands to be determined; and that, once the drive toward extension is added, is the objective ground of a need of speculative reason: namely, to determine more precisely the concept of a necessary being that is to serve as the original ground of other beings, and so to make this being recognizable by some distinguishing mark. Without such necessary problems preceding them there are no *needs*—at least none of *pure reason*; the rest are needs of *inclination*.

of itself apodictically certain, namely the moral law. To that extent it needs no further support [143] from theoretical opinion about the inner constitution of things, the secret aim of the world order, or a ruler presiding over it, in order to bind us in the most perfect way to unconditionally lawful actions. But the subjective effect of this law—namely the *disposition* that conforms to it and is also made necessary by it, the disposition to promote the practically possible highest good—does at least presuppose that the highest good is *possible*. Otherwise it would be practically impossible to strive after the object of a concept that would at bottom be empty and without an object. Now the above postulates concern only the physical or metaphysical conditions of the *possibility* of the highest good—in a word, the conditions lying in the nature of things. But they do so not for the sake of some arbitrary speculative purpose but for the sake of a practically necessary end of the pure rational will. This will does not here *choose*; it obeys an inexorable command of reason, which has its ground *objectively* in the constitution of things as they must be judged universally by pure reason. It is not grounded, say, on *inclination*, which is by no means entitled, for the sake of what we *wish* on merely *subjective* grounds, straightaway to assume the means to it as possible, let alone the object as actual. This, then, is a *need* for an *absolutely necessary purpose*, and it justifies its presupposition not merely as a permitted hypothesis but as a postulate for practical purposes. And granted that the pure moral law inexorably binds everyone as a command (not as a rule of prudence), the upright person may well say: I *will* that there be a God; that my existence in this world be, beyond the connection of nature, also an existence in a pure world of the understanding; and finally that my duration be endless. I hold fast to this and will not let this faith be taken from me. For this is the only case in which my interest, because I *may* not give up anything of it, unavoidably determines my judgment without

regard to sophistries—however little I may be able to answer them or to set more plausible ones against them.[17]

144 To prevent misinterpretations in the use of so unfamiliar a concept as that of a pure practical rational faith, let me be permitted to add one more remark.—It might almost seem as if this rational faith were here itself announced as a *command*, namely the command to assume the highest good as possible. But a faith that is commanded is an absurdity. But recall the discussion above of what the concept of the highest good requires us to assume, and one will become aware that assuming this possibility need not be commanded at all, and that it demands no practical dispositions to *concede* it; rather, speculative reason must grant it without being asked. For surely no one can want to maintain that a worthiness of rational beings in the world to be happy, in conformity with the moral law, is *impossible* in itself when combined with a possession of this happiness proportioned to that worthiness. Now with regard to the first component of the highest good, namely what concerns morality, the moral law gives us merely a command; and to doubt the possib-

17 KANT'S NOTE. In the *Deutsches Museum* of February 1787 there is an essay by a very subtle and clear-headed thinker, the late *Wizenmann*, whose early death is to be regretted. In it he disputes the warrant to infer from a need to the objective reality of its object, and illustrates his point with the example of a *man in love* who, having become infatuated with an idea of beauty that is merely a figment of his own brain, would want to conclude that such an object actually exists somewhere. I grant that he is entirely right about this in all cases where the need is grounded on *inclination*. Such a need cannot necessarily postulate the existence of its object even for the one who is afflicted by it, much less does it contain a demand valid for everyone; it is therefore a merely *subjective* ground of wishes. Here, however, it is a *need of reason*, arising from an *objective* determining ground of the will, namely the moral law, which necessarily binds every rational being. This need therefore entitles us *a priori* to presuppose the conditions in nature that conform to the law, and makes these conditions inseparable from the complete practical use of reason. It is a duty to make the highest good actual to the utmost of our capacity; hence it must also be possible; consequently it is also unavoidable for every rational being in the world to presuppose whatever is necessary for its objective possibility. The presupposition is as necessary as the moral law, and it is valid only in relation to that law.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Thomas Wizenmann (1759–1787), a young writer who took Jacobi's side against Mendelssohn in the pantheism controversy and published an open letter to Kant in the journal *Deutsches Museum*.

ility of that component would be as much as to call the moral law itself into doubt. But as for the second part of that object, namely happiness in thoroughgoing proportion to that worthiness, conceding its possibility in general does not need a command at all, for theoretical reason itself has nothing against it. Only *the way* in which we are to think such a harmony of the laws of nature with those [145] of freedom has something about it with respect to which a *choice* is ours, because theoretical reason decides nothing about it with apodictic certainty; and with respect to this way there can be a moral interest that tips the balance.

Above I said that, according to a mere course of nature in the world, happiness exactly proportioned to moral worth is not to be expected and must be held impossible, and that the possibility of the highest good from this side can therefore be conceded only on the presupposition of a moral author of the world. I deliberately held back from restricting this judgment to the *subjective* conditions of our reason, so as to make use of that restriction only when the kind of assent it involves was to be determined more precisely. In fact the impossibility just mentioned is *merely subjective*; that is, our reason finds it *impossible for itself* to make comprehensible, according to a mere course of nature, so exactly proportioned and thoroughly purposive a connection between two sets of events in the world that occur according to such different laws—although, as with everything else in nature that is purposive, it cannot prove the impossibility of such a connection according to universal laws of nature either, that is, cannot establish it sufficiently on objective grounds.

But now a deciding ground of a different kind comes into play, to tip the balance in the wavering of speculative reason. The command to promote the highest good is grounded objectively (in practical reason); its possibility in general is likewise grounded objectively (in theoretical reason, which has nothing against it). But reason cannot decide objectively the way in which we are to represent this possibility—whether according to universal laws of nature without a wise author presiding over

nature, or only on the presupposition of such an author. Here, then, a *subjective* condition of reason enters: the only way that is theoretically possible for reason, and at the same time the only way conducive to morality (which stands under an *objective* law of reason), of thinking the exact harmony of the realm of nature with the realm of morals as the condition of the possibility of the highest good. Now the promotion of the highest good, and hence the presupposition of its possibility, is *objectively* necessary (though only as a consequence of practical reason). At the same time, however, the manner in which we would think it possible rests with our choice, and in this choice a free interest of [146] pure practical reason decides in favor of assuming a wise author of the world. Consequently the principle that determines our judgment here is indeed *subjective*, as a need; but at the same time, as a means of promoting what is *objectively* (practically) necessary, it is the ground of a *maxim* of assent for moral purposes—that is, a *pure practical rational faith*. This faith, then, is not commanded. It is a voluntary determination of our judgment to assume that existence and to make it the further basis of the use of reason—a determination conducive to the moral (commanded) purpose and, moreover, in agreement with the theoretical need of reason—and as such it has itself sprung from the moral disposition. It can therefore at times waver, even in the well-disposed, but it can never lapse into unbelief.

IX. OUR COGNITIVE FACULTIES WISELY PROPORTIONED

If we could see God and eternity plainly, we would act from fear and hope, never from duty.

If human nature is destined to strive for the highest good, then the measure of its cognitive faculties, and especially their relation to one another, must also be assumed to be suited to this end. Now the critique of pure *speculative* reason proves the utter inadequacy of this reason to solve, in a way adequate to the end, the most important problems set before it. It does not, to be sure, fail to recognize the natural and unmistakable hints of this

same reason, nor the great steps it can take to approach this great goal set out for it—but without ever reaching it by itself, even with the help of the greatest knowledge of nature. So nature seems here to have provided us only in *stepmotherly* fashion with a faculty needed for our end.

Suppose now that nature had complied with our wish here and had granted us that capacity for insight or enlightenment which we should like to possess, or which some even *imagine* they actually possess. What, in all likelihood, would be the consequence? Unless our whole nature were changed at the same time, the *inclinations*, which always have the first word, would first [147] demand their satisfaction and—combined with rational reflection—their greatest possible and lasting satisfaction, under the name of *happiness*. The moral law would speak afterward, in order to keep them within their proper bounds and even to subject them all together to a higher end that takes no account of any inclination. But instead of the conflict that the moral disposition now has to carry on with the inclinations—a conflict in which, after some defeats, moral strength of soul can nonetheless gradually be acquired—*God* and *eternity*, with their *fearsome majesty*, would stand unceasingly *before our eyes* (for what we can prove perfectly counts for as much with us, as regards certainty, as what we assure ourselves of by the evidence of our eyes). Transgression of the law would, of course, be avoided; what is commanded would be done. But the *disposition* from which actions ought to be done cannot be instilled by any command; and here the spur to activity would be immediately at hand and *external*, so that reason would have no need first to work its way up in order to gather strength to resist the inclinations through a vivid representation of the dignity of the law. So most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, only a few from hope, and none at all from duty. And a moral worth of actions—on which alone the worth of the person, and even that of the world, depends in the eyes of the highest wisdom—would not exist at all. As long as human nature remained as it now is, human conduct would thus be turned into a mere mechanism in

which, as in a puppet show, everything would *gesticulate* well, but there would be *no life* in the figures. Now with us things are quite otherwise. With all the exertion of our reason we have only a very obscure and ambiguous prospect of the future; the governor of the world lets us only conjecture his existence and his glory, not behold them or clearly prove them. The moral law within us, on the other hand, demands of us disinterested respect without promising or threatening us anything with certainty; and only when this respect has become active and dominant—and only through it—does the law allow us prospects into the realm of the supersensible, and even then only faint glimpses. Because this is so, a truly moral disposition, devoted immediately to the law, can take place, and the rational creature can become worthy of a share in the highest good that is proportioned to the moral worth of his person and not merely to his actions [148] . So here too it may well hold true, as the study of nature and of the human being otherwise teaches us sufficiently, that the inscrutable wisdom through which we exist is no less worthy of veneration in what it has denied us than in what it has granted us.

Doctrine of Method

How to make the moral law take hold of the human mind.

[151] By the *Doctrine of Method* of pure *practical* reason one cannot understand the way of proceeding with pure practical principles (both in reflection and in exposition) with a view to a *scientific* cognition of them—which alone is what is properly called method elsewhere, in the *theoretical* sphere (for popular cognition needs a *manner*, but science needs a *method*, that is, a procedure *according to principles* of reason, through which alone the manifold of a cognition can become a system). Rather, by this Doctrine of Method is understood the way in which one can provide the laws of pure practical reason with *access* to the human mind and *influence* on its maxims—that is, the way to make objectively practical reason *subjectively* practical as well.

Now it is clear, to be sure, that those determining grounds of the will which alone make maxims properly moral and give them a moral worth—the immediate representation of the law and the objectively necessary compliance with it as duty—must be represented as the actual incentives of actions; for otherwise *legality* of actions would be produced, but not *morality* of dispositions. But it is not so clear—indeed, at first sight it must seem quite improbable to everyone—that subjectively, too, this presentation of pure virtue can have *more power* over the human mind and can furnish a far stronger incentive than all the enticements arising from illusory promises of enjoyment, and in general of everything that may be counted [152] toward happiness, or even all threats of pain and ills, can ever produce: a stronger incentive even for bringing about that legality of

actions, and for producing more forceful resolutions to prefer the law to every other consideration out of pure respect for it. Yet this is actually how things stand; and if human nature were not so constituted, no way of representing the law, however roundabout and however commended, would ever produce morality of disposition. Everything would be sheer hypocrisy; the law would be hated, or even despised, while still being followed for the sake of one's own advantage. The letter of the law (legality) would be found in our actions, but its spirit would not be found at all in our dispositions (morality). And since, with all our efforts, we still cannot entirely free ourselves from reason in our judgment, we would unavoidably have to appear in our own eyes as worthless, depraved human beings. We might try to compensate ourselves for this mortification before the inner court by delighting in the enjoyments that, as we imagined, some natural or divine law we had assumed had attached to the machinery of its regulation—a regulation that went merely by what one does, without troubling itself about the motives for which one does it.

It cannot be denied, of course, that to bring a mind that is still uncultivated, or has even run wild, onto the track of the morally good for the first time, some preparatory guidance is needed: to lure it by its own advantage or to frighten it by harm. But as soon as this machinery, these leading strings, have had some effect, the pure moral motive must without fail be brought to the soul. This motive grounds a character (a practically consistent cast of mind according to unchangeable maxims), and it is the only one that does so; it also teaches the human being to feel his own dignity. For both reasons it gives the mind a power, unexpected even by itself, to tear itself away from all sensible attachment insofar as this seeks to become dominant, and to find ample compensation for the sacrifices it makes in the independence of its intelligible nature and in the greatness of soul to which it sees itself destined. We will therefore prove this property of our mind—this receptivity to a pure moral interest, and hence the moving force of the pure representation of virtue

when it is properly brought home to the human heart—to be the most powerful incentive to the good and, where duration and punctiliousness in following moral maxims are concerned, the only one; [153] and we will prove it through observations that anyone can make. At the same time, however, it must be remembered that if these observations prove only the actuality of such a feeling, but not a moral improvement brought about by it, this does no damage to the only method of making the objectively practical laws of pure reason subjectively practical through the mere pure representation of duty—as if that method were an empty fantasy. For since this method has never yet been put into practice, experience cannot yet show anything of its success; one can only ask for proofs of receptivity to such incentives. These I will now briefly present, and then sketch in a few words the method of founding and cultivating genuine moral dispositions.

MORAL JUDGMENT IN CONVERSATION

People love to argue over the moral worth of actions, and educators should use this.

If one attends to the course of conversation in mixed company, made up not merely of scholars and subtle reasoners but also of people of business or women, one notices that besides storytelling and joking another kind of entertainment finds a place there, namely argument. For storytelling, if it is to bring novelty and with it interest, is soon exhausted, and joking easily grows stale. Among all kinds of argument, however, none more readily draws in people who are otherwise soon bored by all subtle reasoning, and none brings more liveliness into the company, than argument about the *moral worth* of this or that action by which the character of some person is to be made out. Those who otherwise find everything subtle and hair-splitting in theoretical questions dry and tiresome soon join in when it comes to making out the moral content of a good or bad action that has been recounted. And in devising everything that could diminish

the purity of the intention, and hence the degree of virtue in it, or even just make it suspect, they are as exact, as hair-splitting, as subtle as one would never otherwise expect of them with any object of speculation. In these judgments one can often see the character of the people judging others shining through. Some of them, exercising their office of judge chiefly over the dead, seem especially inclined to defend the good that is told of this or that deed of theirs against all hurtful objections of impurity, and ultimately to defend the whole moral worth of the person against the reproach of dissimulation and secret malice. Others, by contrast, are more intent on accusations and charges [154] with which to contest this worth. Yet one cannot always attribute to the latter the intention of wanting to reason virtue away altogether from every human example, so as to make it an empty name. Often it is only well-meant strictness in determining genuine moral content according to an uncompromising law. Compared with this law, and not with examples, self-conceit in moral matters sinks greatly, and humility is not merely taught but felt by everyone who examines himself rigorously. Nevertheless, with those who defend the purity of intention in given examples, one can mostly see that where it has the presumption of uprightness in its favor, they would gladly wipe away even the slightest stain. Their motive is this: if the truthfulness of all examples were disputed and the purity of all human virtue denied, virtue might in the end be held to be a mere figment of the brain, and so all striving toward it would be belittled as vain affectation and deceptive self-conceit.

I do not know why the educators of youth have not long since made use of this propensity of reason to enter with pleasure upon even the subtlest examination of practical questions that are raised. Why, after laying down a purely moral catechism as the basis, have they not searched through the biographies of ancient and modern times with the aim of having at hand instances of the duties set out? By means of these, and especially by comparing similar actions under different circumstances, they could set their pupils' judgment to work at noting the lesser

or greater moral content of those actions. In this they will find that even early youth, which is otherwise still unripe for all speculation, soon becomes very sharp-sighted and, moreover, because it feels the progress of its power of judgment, not a little interested. And, what is most important, they can hope with confidence that frequent practice in recognizing good conduct in all its purity and applauding it, and in noting with regret or contempt even the slightest deviation from it, will leave a lasting impression of esteem on the one side and of abhorrence on the other—even though until then it is carried on only as a game of judgment in which children can compete with one another. Through the mere habit of often regarding such actions as worthy of approval or of blame, these impressions would lay a good foundation for uprightness in the [155] future conduct of their lives. Only I would wish to spare them examples of so-called *noble* (supermeritorious) actions, which our sentimental writings throw around so lavishly, and to make everything turn solely on duty and on the worth that a human being can and must give himself in his own eyes through the consciousness of not having transgressed it. For whatever comes down to empty wishes and longings for unattainable perfection produces nothing but heroes of romance. Priding themselves on their feeling for extravagant greatness, they thereby release themselves from observing what they commonly and ordinarily owe, which then seems to them only insignificantly small.[1]

1 KANT'S NOTE. It is entirely advisable to praise actions in which a great, unselfish, sympathetic disposition and humanity shine forth. But here one must draw attention not so much to *elevation of soul*, which is very fleeting and transitory, as to the *heart's submission* to *duty*, from which a longer-lasting impression can be expected, because it brings principles with it (elevation of soul brings only surges of feeling). One need only reflect a little and one will always find some debt one has somehow incurred toward the human race (even if it were only that, through the inequality of human beings in the civil constitution, one enjoys advantages on account of which others must go without all the more). This will keep the self-loving fancy of *merit* from crowding out the thought of *duty*.

THE TEST OF THE HONEST MAN

Kant tests pure virtue on a ten-year-old with the story of an honest man who withstands every threat.

But if one asks what, then, *pure* morality actually is, against which, as a touchstone, the moral content of every action must be tested, I must confess that only philosophers can make the decision of this question doubtful. For in common human reason it has long since been decided—not, indeed, through abstract general formulas, but through habitual use—much like the difference between the right hand and the left. We will therefore first show the criterion of pure virtue in an example. Imagining that it has been put before a ten-year-old boy for judgment, we will see whether he would necessarily have to judge thus of his own accord, without being directed to do so by the teacher. Tell the story of an honest man whom people want to induce to join the slanderers of an innocent person who is, moreover, powerless (as, say, Anne Boleyn was when accused by Henry VIII of England). He is offered gains, that is, great gifts or high rank; he rejects them. This will produce mere applause and approval [156] in the listener's soul, because it is a matter of gain. Now one begins with the threat of loss. Among these slanderers are his best friends, who now renounce their friendship; close relatives, who threaten to disinherit him (he has no fortune of his own); powerful people, who can persecute and harm him in every place and circumstance; a sovereign, who threatens him with the loss of his freedom, indeed of life itself.[2] But so that the measure of suffering may be full, and so that he may also feel the pain that only a morally good heart can feel really deeply, picture his family, threatened with extreme distress and want, *imploring him to yield*. Picture him as upright, yet not with organs of feeling that are hard and insensible either to compassion or to his own distress; picture him at a moment when he

2 Anne Boleyn (c. 1501–1536), second wife of Henry VIII, beheaded on charges of adultery and treason now widely regarded as fabricated.

wishes he had never lived to see the day that exposed him to such unspeakable pain—and yet remaining true to his resolve to be honest, without wavering or even doubting. Then my young listener will be raised step by step from mere approval to admiration, from there to amazement, and finally to the greatest veneration and a lively wish that he himself could be such a man (though certainly not in his circumstances). And yet virtue is here worth so much only because it costs so much, not because it brings anything in. All the admiration, and even the effort to resemble this character, rests here entirely on the purity of the moral principle, which can be made really striking only by removing from the incentives of the action everything that human beings may count toward happiness. Thus morality must have the more power over the human heart the more purely it is presented. From this it follows that if the law of morals and the image of holiness and virtue are to exercise any influence at all on our soul, they can exercise it only insofar as they are laid to heart as incentives in their purity, unmixed with aims at one's own well-being—for it is in suffering that they show themselves most gloriously. But that whose removal strengthens the effect of a moving force must have been a hindrance. Consequently every admixture of incentives taken from one's own happiness is a hindrance to gaining the moral law influence over the human heart. I maintain further that even in that admired action, if the motive from which it was done was high esteem [157] for his duty, then it is precisely this respect for the law—not, say, a claim to be thought inwardly magnanimous and of a noble, meritorious cast of mind—that has the greatest power over the mind of the spectator. Consequently duty, not merit, must have not only the most determinate influence on the mind but also, when it is represented in the right light of its inviolability, the most penetrating.

In our times, people hope to accomplish more with the mind through melting, tender-hearted feelings, or through high-flown, puffed-up pretensions that make the heart withered rather than strong, than through the dry and earnest representa-

tion of duty, which is better suited to human imperfection and to progress in the good. In such times, pointing to this method is more necessary than ever. To hold up actions as noble, magnanimous and meritorious as models for children, in the belief that one wins them over by instilling an enthusiasm for such actions, is altogether counterproductive. For since they are still so far behind in observing the commonest duty, and even in judging it correctly, this amounts to turning them into fantasists early on. But even with the better-instructed and more experienced part of humankind, this supposed incentive has, if not a harmful effect on the heart, at least no genuinely moral one—which is, after all, what one wanted to bring about by it.

All *feelings*, especially those that are meant to produce unaccustomed exertion, must have their effect at the moment when they are at their height and before they subside; otherwise they accomplish nothing. For the heart naturally returns to its natural, moderate pace of life and so falls back into the languor that was proper to it before, because something was brought to it that stimulated it but nothing that strengthened it. *Principles* must be built on concepts. On any other foundation only passing fits can come about, and these can give the person no moral worth—indeed, not even confidence in himself, without which the consciousness of one's moral disposition and of such a character, the highest good in the human being, cannot take place at all. Now if these concepts are to become subjectively practical, they must not stop at the objective laws of morality, admiring them and esteeming them highly in relation to humanity. They must rather consider the representation of those laws in relation to the human being and to him as an individual. Then that law appears in [158] a form that is indeed highly worthy of respect but not so pleasing—not as though it belonged to the element to which he is naturally accustomed, but as constraining him to leave this element, often not without self-denial, and to betake himself to a higher one, in which he can maintain himself only with effort and with unceasing apprehension of relapse. In a

word, the moral law demands compliance from duty, not from fondness, which one neither can nor should presuppose at all.

Let us now see in an example whether there is more subjective moving force of an incentive in representing an action as noble and magnanimous than in representing it merely as duty in relation to the solemn moral law. Someone tries, at the greatest risk to his life, to rescue people from a shipwreck, and in the end loses his own life in doing so. This action is counted on the one hand as duty, but on the other, and for the most part, also as meritorious. Yet our high esteem for it is greatly weakened by the concept of *duty to oneself*, which seems here to suffer some infringement. More decisive is the magnanimous sacrifice of one's life for the preservation of one's country. And yet some scruple remains as to whether it is so perfectly a duty to devote oneself to this aim of one's own accord and unbidden, and the action does not have in itself the full force of a model and of an impulse to imitation. But suppose it is an inescapable duty, whose transgression violates the moral law in itself and without regard to human welfare, and as it were tramples its holiness underfoot (duties of the kind one is accustomed to call duties to God, because in him we think the ideal of holiness in substance). Then we accord the most perfect esteem to compliance with it at the sacrifice of everything that might ever have value for the most intimate of all our inclinations. And we find our soul strengthened and elevated by such an example when we can convince ourselves by it that human nature is capable of so great an elevation above everything that nature might ever muster in the way of incentives to the contrary. *Juvenal* presents such an example in a climax that lets the reader feel vividly the force of the incentive contained in the pure law of duty as duty: *Esto bonus miles, tutor bonus, arbiter idem Integer; ambiguae si quando citabere testis* [Be a good soldier, a good guardian, likewise an upright judge; if ever you are summoned as witness in a doubtful][3]

159 *Incertaeque rei, Phalaris licet imperet, ut sis Falsus, et admoto dictet periuria tauro, Summum Crede nefas animam praeferre pudori Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.* [and uncertain case, then even if Phalaris should command you to lie and, bringing up his bull, dictate perjuries to you, count it the greatest wickedness to prefer life to honor, and for the sake of life to lose the reasons for living.][4]

If we can bring anything flattering about merit into our action, then the incentive is already somewhat mixed with self-love, and so has some assistance from the side of sensibility. But to subordinate everything to the holiness of duty alone, and to become conscious that one *can* do so because our own reason recognizes this as its command and says that one *ought* to do it—that is, as it were, to raise oneself entirely above the sensible world itself. And in this same consciousness of the law, as an incentive, there is inseparably bound up the consciousness of a faculty *that rules over sensibility*, even if not always with effect. Yet through frequent occupation with this incentive, and through initially smaller attempts at using that faculty, there is hope that this effect too will be achieved, so as gradually to produce in us the greatest, but pure, moral interest in it.

THE TWO EXERCISES OF THE METHOD

First practice judging actions by moral laws, then notice the purity of the will in examples.

The method therefore takes the following course. *At first* the only concern is to make judging according to moral laws a natural occupation, accompanying all our own free actions as well as our observation of the free actions of others; to make it, as it were, a habit; and to sharpen it—by first asking whether the action conforms objectively *to the moral law*, and to which one. In doing so one distinguishes attention to the law that merely

3 Juvenal, *Satires* 8.79–84.

4 Phalaris, tyrant of Acragas in Sicily (6th century BC), was said to roast his victims alive inside a hollow bronze bull.

furnishes a *ground* of obligation from attention to the law that is actually *obligating* (*leges obligandi a legibus obligantibus* [laws of obligating from obligating laws]) (as, for example,[5] the law of what human beings' *need* demands of me, as opposed to what their *right* demands of me, of which the latter prescribes essential duties, the former only non-essential ones); and so one teaches how to distinguish the different duties that come together in one action. The other point to which attention must be directed is the question whether the action was also done (subjectively) *for the sake of the moral law*, and so has not only moral correctness as a deed but also moral worth as a disposition, in virtue of its maxim. Now there is no doubt that this practice, and the consciousness of a cultivation of our reason that arises from it—of reason as it judges merely about the practical—must gradually produce a certain interest even in the law [160] of that reason, and hence in morally good actions. For we end up loving that whose contemplation lets us feel the expanded use of our cognitive powers; and this expanded use is promoted above all by that in which we find moral correctness, since only in such an order of things can reason feel at home with its faculty of determining *a priori*, according to principles, what ought to happen. Even an observer of nature comes to love objects that at first offend his senses when he discovers the great purposiveness of their organization and so lets his reason feast on contemplating them. And *Leibniz* gently put an insect he had carefully examined under the microscope back on its leaf, because he had found himself instructed by looking at it and had, as it were, received a kindness from it.

But this occupation of the power of judgment, which lets us feel our own cognitive powers, is not yet interest in actions and their morality themselves. It merely makes one enjoy engaging in such judging, and it gives virtue, or the cast of mind that follows moral laws, a form of beauty that is admired but not for that reason sought (*laudatur et alget* [it is praised and left out in

5 A distinction from the Latin textbooks of natural law: laws that merely supply a ground of obligation versus laws that actually bind.

the cold]). It is like everything whose contemplation subjectively produces a consciousness of the harmony of our powers of representation, and in which we feel our whole cognitive faculty (understanding and imagination) strengthened: it produces a satisfaction that can also be communicated to others, while the existence of the object nonetheless remains indifferent to us, since the object is regarded only as the occasion for becoming aware of the predisposition of talents in us that is raised above animality.[6] Now, however, the *second* exercise begins its work: namely, to make the purity of the will noticeable through the vivid presentation of the moral disposition in examples—at first only as the will's negative perfection, insofar as in an action from duty no incentives of the inclinations flow into it as determining grounds. Through this the pupil's attention is held on the consciousness of his *freedom*. And although this renunciation arouses an initial feeling of pain, nevertheless, by withdrawing the pupil from the constraint of even true needs, it at the same time announces to him a liberation from the manifold dissatisfaction in which all these needs entangle him, and the mind is made receptive [161] to the feeling of contentment from other sources. The heart is freed and relieved of a burden that always secretly presses upon it when pure moral resolutions, of which examples are presented, uncover to the human being an inner faculty that is otherwise not properly known even to himself: *inner freedom*, the capacity to release himself from the impetuous importunity of the inclinations to such a degree that none of them, not even the most cherished, has any influence on a resolution for which we are now to make use of our reason. Take a case where *I alone* know that the wrong is on my side. Freely confessing it and offering to make amends meets with strong opposition from vanity, from self-interest, and even from my otherwise not unjustified aversion toward the one whose right I have impaired; and yet I can set myself above all these misgivings. In this there is contained a consciousness of inde-

6 Juvenal, *Satires* 1.74: "probitas laudatur et alget"—honesty is praised and left to freeze.

pendence from inclinations and from circumstances of fortune, and of the possibility of being sufficient to oneself, which is salutary to me everywhere, in other respects as well. And now the law of duty, through the positive worth that complying with it lets us feel, finds easier access through *respect for ourselves* in the consciousness of our freedom. On this self-respect, when it is well grounded—when the human being fears nothing more than to find himself, on inner self-examination, contemptible and reprehensible in his own eyes—every good moral disposition can now be grafted. For this is the best, indeed the only, guard to keep ignoble and corrupting impulses from forcing their way into the mind.

With this I have wanted only to point to the most general maxims of the doctrine of method of moral education and practice. Since the variety of duties would require further special determinations for each kind of duty, and would thus make up an extensive undertaking, I will be held excused if, in a work such as this, which is only a preliminary exercise, I leave it at these basic outlines.

Conclusion

The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and the more steadily reflection dwells on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*. I need not search for either of them as though they were veiled in darkness [162] or lay in the extravagant, beyond my horizon, and merely conjecture them; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. The first begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and extends the connection in which I stand into an immeasurable vastness of worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and further into the boundless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and their continuation. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and presents me in a world that has true infinity but is perceptible only to the understanding—a world with which (and thereby at the same time with all those visible worlds) I recognize myself to be in a connection that is not, as in the first case, merely contingent, but universal and necessary. The first view, of a countless multitude of worlds, as it were annihilates my importance as an *animal creature*, which must give back the matter from which it came to the planet (a mere point in the universe) after it has been endowed for a short time (one knows not how) with vital force. The second, by contrast, infinitely raises my worth as an *intelligence* through my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole world of sense—at least so far as can be inferred from the

purposive determination of my existence through this law, a determination that is not restricted to the conditions and limits of this life but goes into the infinite.

But though admiration and respect can indeed stimulate inquiry, they cannot make up for the lack of it. What, then, is to be done in order to carry out this inquiry in a way that is useful and suited to the sublimity of its object? Examples may serve here as a warning, but also for imitation. The contemplation of the world began from the most glorious spectacle that the human senses could ever present and that our understanding could ever bear to follow in its vast extent—and ended in astrology. Morality began with the noblest property in human nature, whose development and cultivation look toward infinite benefit —and ended in fanaticism or superstition. So it goes with all attempts that are still crude, in which the principal part of the business depends on the use of reason—a use that does not, like the use of our feet, come of itself through frequent exercise, especially when it concerns properties [163] that cannot be displayed so immediately in common experience. But once the maxim had come into vogue, however late, of first considering well all the steps that reason intends to take, and of letting it proceed only on the track of a method thought through in advance, the judging of the structure of the universe took an entirely different direction, and with it an incomparably happier outcome. The fall of a stone, the motion of a sling, resolved into their elements and the forces manifested in them, and treated mathematically, finally produced that clear insight into the structure of the world, unchangeable for all the future, which with continued observation can hope only ever to expand, and need never fear having to retreat.

That example can advise us to take the same path in dealing with the moral predispositions of our nature, and can give us hope of similar success. We do, after all, have at hand examples of reason judging morally. To analyze these into their elementary concepts; and, lacking *mathematics*, to undertake a procedure similar to *chemistry*—the *separation* of the empirical from the

rational that may be found in them—in repeated experiments on common human understanding: this can make both known to us *pure*, and show with certainty what each can accomplish by itself alone. In this way it can forestall, on the one hand, the errors of a judgment still *crude* and unpracticed, and on the other (what is far more necessary) those *flights of genius* by which—as tends to happen with the adepts of the philosopher's stone—dreamed-of treasures are promised and real ones squandered, without any methodical inquiry or knowledge of nature. In a word: science (critically sought and methodically directed) is the narrow gate that leads to the *doctrine of wisdom*, if by this is understood not merely what one ought to *do*, but what is to serve *teachers* as a guideline for clearing the path to wisdom, which everyone should walk, so that it is good and recognizable, and for securing others against wrong paths. It is a science of which philosophy must always remain the guardian. The public has no share in its subtle investigation, but it does have a share in the *doctrines* that, only after such working-through, can become truly clear to it.[1]

1 An allusion to Matthew 7:13–14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate … narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life."